

暁 なつめ

illustration

三嶋くろね

この素晴らしい
世界に9
祝福を!

紅の
宿命

Kono Subarashii Sekai ni Shukufuku o!

**- Volume 9 -
Crimson Destiny**

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この素晴らしい
世界に9
祝福を!

紅の
宿命



この素晴らしい世界に 祝福を!9

紅の
宿命

オリジナル
アニメ
ブルーレイ付き
同梱版

暁
なつめ
illustration
三嶋くろね



KADOKAWA



「これは紅魔族に伝わる
魔術的なお守りです」

めぐみん

「……ねえダクネス。
前からの約束通り、
ゼル帝の小屋を
作るのを手伝って?」

アクア

「おいカズマ、せめてトイレの窓に
掛かっているカーテンを閉めてくれ!」


ダクネス

「私の事は、覚えてますか？
私は、めぐみんと言うのですが……」

「覚えてないわ」

❁ ウォルバク ❁





「いつも何だかんだ文句を言いながらも
やっぱり皆を助けてくれる、
本当は優しいのに素直じゃない
あなたが好きです」

Character



アクア

職業 アークプリースト

誰にも制御できない水の女神。特技は宴会芸。



カズマ

職業 冒険者

ニート気質の主人公。幸運値の高さが取り柄。



ダクネス

職業 クルセイダー

防御専門のドM女騎士。実は大貴族のお嬢様。



めぐみん

職業 アークウィザード

紅魔族随一の天才。爆裂魔法以外は興味なし。



ちよむすけ

めぐみんの
使い魔の黒猫。

ゼル帝

アクアのペットの
ひよこ。

ゆん
ゆん

自称めぐみんの
ライバル。

この素晴らしい世界に祝福を! 9



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PROLOGUE

“‘EXPLOSION’----!!”

Accompanying this body-shaking roar was a gale that ravaged the surrounding area.

And thus a new crater was born on the plains a short distance away from Axel.

The construction workers were going to be busy again.

Megumin, who had collapsed onto the ground, turned her head to me and asked:

“How many points was that?”

I – who had recently been given the title of “Explosion Sommelier” by Megumin – wouldn’t give a high rating very easily.

“--Hmm, based on the destructiveness alone, I’d give it 90 points. But I noticed that the intensity of the heat wave wasn’t as strong as it usually was. You were trying to control it to accommodate for the summer heat, weren’t you?”

When Megumin heard my question, a bright smile flashed across her face.

“Exactly. I thought to myself, ‘Is only focusing on raw destructive power really good enough?’ So I decided that for today’s Explosion spell, I’d try making a cool breeze. What’d you think of the wind that blew away all that hot and stuffy air? I think it’d be a good addition to Axel’s natural scenery highlights.

I might not have understood half of what she just said, but I still got the gist of it.

“For your consideration of the audience, and for the beautiful roundness of that crater, today I’ll give you 97 points!”

“Thank you very much! I’ll keep on doing my best!”

After we finished our stupid conversation, I picked Megumin up off the ground. I was already used to carrying her light body, which still hadn’t developed the slightest bit.

“Sorry for always bothering you like this.”

“If you’re really sorry, then raise your level already. Boost your max MP high enough so you don’t collapse anymore, okay?”

I complained to Megumin as we walked back to Axel.

“This’ll probably keep happening no matter how many times I level up, you know? I mean, I put all the skill points I get from leveling up into increasing the power of my Explosion magic.”

“What?! I was wondering why even after all this time your max MP hadn’t caught up with your MP costs... So it was you all along! And here I was thinking that we wouldn’t have to go home like this anymore after you got your level high enough. Give me back those hopes!”

“What’s so bad about this? Isn’t the occasional skinship between companions a necessity?”

“Oi, you of all people have absolutely no right to say that.”

I considered whether I should step things up from mere “skinship” with Megumin, who seemed completely remorseless.

“The me from back when I lived in the Village of Crimson Magic probably would’ve never believed I’d end up cherishing my companions so much.”

“Yeah, well I’m not really feeling that cherishment right now...”

Megumin chuckled at my immediate rebuttal.

“So what were you like back then? Actually, more importantly, what possessed you to go nuts enough to decide to learn Explosion?”

“How rude of you to call me insane. As for what I was like, well...”

Megumin went silent for a while. Was she thinking about her past?

“I used to never interact with anyone. Since I was a genius, I thought I’d be fine even if I was alone.”

“Oh, so you were already a chuuni back then? Er, I mean, you were a nutcase even as a kid?”

Hearing my comment, Megumin started putting some strength into the arms she had wrapped around my neck.

“Okay, okay, my bad, let me try again! Basically, you were just an unwante- Ow, ow, ow! Hey, go easy on me! Your level and strength are both higher than mine!”

Megumin, who seemed amazed at my reaction, bemusedly sighed to herself on my back.

“Well, it’s your fault for saying something so uncalled for... Anyways, you wanted to hear the story of how I learned Explosion magic, right?”

“Oh, right! Normally, you can’t learn Explosion unless somebody else taught you first, right? So I was wondering what kind of troublesome person your teacher was.”

“Calling the benefactor I looked up to so much a troublesome person is very rude. Ah, that’s right...”

A nostalgic expression appeared on Megumin’s face as she thought of the past.

“--I’ll tell you after I tell a certain person that I’ve learned Explosion magic.”

She said with a happy smile.

CHAPTER 1

GIFTING THESE PEACEFUL DAYS WITH HAPPINESS!

Part 1

They say that everyone has a time when they're really popular.

"Could you come to my room tonight? I have something important to tell you."

...And the fact that Megumin told me that must be proof that my time had finally come. Though the signs were already there.

That's right, I'd already noticed that from time to time, Megumin seemed to show signs that she liked me.

I'm not the dense or deaf type, after all.

It's just that if I were to rush things, my dignity as the older one would be at risk.

——That day.

It was dinner time. I was being my usual cool self as I sat at the dining table.

"Rejoice, everybody! While I was loitering around the shopping district earlier, somebody told me I could take the leftover liquor from the Thanksgiving festival after-party back home with me! Look here, this is an expensive top-grade brand! Let's party till dawn!"

Sitting opposite to me, Aqua happily hugged a wine bottle and showed it off to everyone.

Unfortunately, I've got a prior engagement tonight. An important one.

But I can't talk about it, so even though I wanted to retort with a "You really can't read the mood at all, huh?", I couldn't.

Well, putting me aside since I'm so cool and composed, there's no way some fine wine would be enough to tempt the othe——

"...Hm, it really is quite high quality. I was busy during the Goddess Eris Thanksgiving Festival, so I didn't get to enjoy it with everyone else. So tonight, let's hold our very own after-party.

Huh?

"N-No, no, no, Darkness, hold on a second. I think everyone should turn in early tonight. You've gotta be tired after everything that's happened, right?"

"Not particularly? Be it managing the festival or fulfilling my duties as the landlord, everything's over with now. There hasn't been anything tiring lately."

Darkness, who was in the middle of laying out the cutlery, tilted her head in confusion.

I had an important engagement with Megumin tonight.

I didn't have time to play around with these idiots till morning.

"Well look, *I'm* tired from fighting monsters day in and day out. So I'll be heading to bed early tonight."

"Are you joking? You didn't even leave the mansion today, and you sleep more than twelve hours a day anyways."

And then, while I was troubling over how to counter Darkness' precise response,

"I think it's a great idea, too. Kazuma, let's just party all night with everyone, okay?"

"Huh?!"

Megumin, the very person who made that engagement, said that while holding a heavy-looking pot in her hands.

Didn't this girl know why I didn't want to attend this party so much?!

“Look, we’re even eating your favorite, Onion Duck Hot Pot. And these aren’t farm-raised ducks either, they’re straight from the wild. They’re full of experience points so they’re twice as delicious.”

It wasn’t clear if Megumin understood how I felt as she placed the pot down with an awkward smile.

“Hey, Megumin, is this really okay? What about that thing tonight...?”

She chuckled lightly in response to my anxious whispering.

“Isn’t tomorrow night fine too? There’s still plenty of time.”

She didn’t understand, this girl didn’t understand at all!

Why would you postpone things *now*? She threw out such tempting words and then she just postpones it! What kind of joke was this?! There’s no way I’d be getting any sleep tonight! What was she even trying to do, leaving me hanging after filling me with so much anticipation?!

“What’s got you so bothered, Kazuma? Your nostrils are widening. It’s the same expression you make when you spend the night outside every now and then.”

“I-I-It’s nothing! I’m just super happy my favorite Onion Duck’s on the menu tonight! Yum, this duck looks delicious, I bet I’ll be leveling up again!”

Aqua, who was only ever sharp during pointless times like this, forced me to start frantically trying to hide my intentions.

And as she watched me, Megumin happily smiled.

Part 2

After the Goddess Eris Thanksgiving Festival ended, the town went back to normal.

Since Axel was the sacred ground where the goddess Eris herself had descended to the mortal world, the town became a pilgrimage site. But that trend had already subsided, so now pilgrims were only an occasional sight.

It was around this time that Megumin invited me to visit her room, but something kept coming up every single night. It was really troubling.

First there was that night when Aqua said she wanted to party. Then the next day, Aqua dragged Megumin to her room and played some games with her all night. The day after that, Megumin made a strange declaration (“Here in Axel, we’re high class ladies, so we should have an all-girls meetings every now and then.”), then stayed out all night with Aqua. And every single day after that, she spent all her time with Aqua...

...Should I just tie her up tonight?

After finishing breakfast, I considered doing that while watching Aqua, who was lovingly gazing at Emperor Zell on her lap.

Darkness, whose skill in brewing tea was the only thing I’d acknowledge her for, had gone to the kitchen to make some after-meal tea. Meanwhile, Aqua was caressing the chick on her lap with a satisfied look on her face.

She was probably imagining that she was stroking some high class pet like rich people do in the movies, but Emperor Zell was just an angry chick psychotically pecking at the fingers reaching out to him.

“So, what’ve you been up to till now, Megumin? You’ve been fidgeting with something I’ve never seen before.”

“...This thing? It’s a Crimson Magic Clan tradition, an amulet with magical properties. You stuff the hair of people with powerful magic into an amulet, then give it to a comrade. It might only be psychological reassurance, but I still want to gift you this for your birthday, since you die so often.”

An anime-style illustration of a young girl with long black hair and large orange eyes. She is wearing a white long-sleeved shirt with a red vest and a red sash. Her hands are clasped in front of her. In the background, a large hand holds a red and gold patterned wand. The background is filled with soft pink circles.

「これは紅魔族に伝わる
魔術的なお守りです」

めぐみん

It *was* true that I was always the one dying, but I get the feeling that accepting that amulet would only hoist my death flag even higher.

“That sounds nice. Would anyone’s hair do? And is it the type where the more you put in, the more effective it gets...?”

Darkness had come back. She poured the water she just boiled into the teapot.

Megumin was focusing on stuffing the hairs into the amulet as she explained to Darkness:

“Yes, it’ll be more effective. That’s why we gave the people who went out to defeat the Demon King an amulet filled with the hair of the entire village. There was so much hair that it was on the verge of bursting, that amulet must’ve definitely worked. And by the way, this amulet does more than just protect its owner, it also has the excellent effect of ensuring your luggage won’t ever be stolen. And if you ever lose it, someone will give it back to you immediately.”

I think it’s more that seeing an amulet with hair sprouting out of it would disgust any potential thieves out of stealing, and that if anyone were to pick it up they’d be afraid of strange things haunting them so they’d want to return it as fast as they could.

At this moment, Darkness pulled out a strand of long, blond hair.

“Could you put this in for me too? Although I don’t have powerful magic, so there probably won’t be much of an effect.”

She said as she offered the hair to Megumin.

Megumin took the hair and happily stuffed it into the amulet.

“.....”

Everyone then naturally shifted their gaze towards Aqua.

Aqua, who was in pain after getting her fingers pecked by Emperor Zell, noticed everyone staring at her, then looked around uneasily.

“...? What? Are you all so insolent that you’d ask for the hair of a goddess like me? Listen carefully, the hair of a goddess is sacred and rare-”

“Cut the bullshit, read the mood, and hand it over! The festival’s already over, and you’re *still* saying that you’re a goddess?!”

“ I don’t wanna——! Okay, I get it, don’t pull my hair like that! It hurts, at least use some scissors to cut a strand off!”

I forcefully pulled a hair off of Aqua’s head then handed it to Megumin for her amulet.

The Japanese also had a tradition of putting hair inside amulets, so I was familiar with the idea.

Darkness smiled wryly as she watched Aqua and me, then poured tea out for everyone.

“Okay then, Kazuma, please take this. It’s only for mental comfort, so you can just stuff it somewhere in your belongings.”

“Oh, alright, thanks.”

I took the amulet from Megumin, but kept it on my person instead of leaving to put it in my bag in my room.

“My hair has powerful effects, so you’d better cherish that amulet. Or else you’ll receive divine retribution.”

“Will having this on me drop my intelligence or attract the undead?”

“...Hey, Darkness. You promised, so help me build a pet house for Emperor Zell, okay?”

「……ねえダクネス。
前からの約束通り、
ゼル帝の小屋を
作るのを手伝って?」

アクア

“Hey, tell me! Will I attract the undead if I have this on me?!”

Aqua ignored my question, grabbed Darkness’ hand, and rushed outside.

I sighed after being left behind in the living room. Megumin smiled happily as she watched me.

“What’s with that devious smile on your face? You thinking of something indecent?”

“No! I’m not thinking about anything weird, and this isn’t a devious smile! I’m just smiling gently!”

Megumin responded loudly as she sipped the tea in her cup, which she was holding with both hands.

And then I finally noticed the situation I was in.

Although there were all sorts of obstacles lately, right now the two of us were all alone.

What was the important thing Megumin wanted to tell me?

“Why are you so quiet all of a sudden? Are you nervous because it’s just the two of us?”

As if she were reading my mind, Megumin teased me.

What, am I the only one feeling restless here?

Am I the only one feeling conscious of the fact that the two of us were the only people in this huge room?

“I’m just a little bothered by what you said earlier, that you had something to tell me. Er, no, I’m not really bothered, alright? I don’t have any weird expectations or anything, there’ve been plenty of times where you built up my anticipation then just left me hanging after all.”

I raised my voice to defend myself.

Megumin lifted her cup to her mouth and giggled.

Why was such a trivial matter making my face heat up?

What's going on with me? Was I just more conscious of Megumin because she'd been showing signs that she liked me every now and then?

Damn it, what kind of man was I, getting toyed around like this by a loli...?!

Ignoring my inner turmoil, Megumin's gaze wavered a little.

"What I wanted to tell you was..."

Just when she was about to say it,

"Sorry, Megumin! Aqua's calling for you, can you come over for a bit? She said that I was too clumsy and useless, so she wants you to substitute for me...! I-In her words, 'I didn't ask you to destroy the pet house, I asked you to help build it! Just get Megumin over here, and deal with that slacker Kazuma so he won't get in my way!'..."

Darkness charged through the door on the verge of tears.

...How should I put this? That was some terrible timing.

No, maybe I should say it was perfect?

"Shouldn't this be my time to shine? I'm the expert with crafting skills, so why's she asking for Megumin?"

"No, I told her that too. But she said that you'd definitely do something unnecessary, and shape Emperor Zell's house like a stove or something."

She knew me well.

"I'll be right back, then. Please keep an eye on Kazuma, Darkness.

"Hey, what's that supposed to mean? It should be the other way around, if anything."

Megumin left with a smile as she listened to my protest.

Ugghhh, what's *with* this situation?

I had the feeling I was being toyed with.

“...Hey, Kazuma, what’s going on between you and Megumin?”

Darkness, who had been watching my conversation with Megumin from the side, suddenly blurted that out..

Even if she asked me that... All Megumin did was thank me, and say that she liked me in an obviously teasing manner...

So in conclusion:

“Absolutely nothing.”

“That’s impossible! If there’s nothing between you two, then what’s going on with Megumin’s behavior?! I already heard from Aqua, she said that you’ve been looking for Megumin at her room every night. Did you do something to her there? You attempted to lay your hands on her back at the Home of the Crimson Magic, after all!”

Out of nowhere came a rebuke.

“I’ve been thinking about this for a while now, but just what kind of person do you all think I am? Watch it, or my ‘Steal’ will give you a taste of crying. And I’m not lying. I don’t know exactly what you’re implying, but whatever you’re imagining didn’t happen.” After listening to what I said,

“...I-I’m talking about, you know, *that*... You know very well what I mean, but you’re still making me say it? *That*... Kissing Megumin, or something and... groping her breasts...!”

Darkness bashfully responded.

I still don’t get her standard for shame.

“No, there wasn’t any kissing or any groping. You’re looking down on me too much. Look into my eyes, does it look like I’m lying?”

Darkness stared into my pure eyes, and gradually started showing an awkward expression.

“... Ugh. They look murky, but... it seems that you aren't lying. My apologies, so there really was nothing. By after seeing Megumin act like that, I was sure that *something* had to have happened... No, it's nothing, forget it. I'm truly sorry...”

Embarrassed, Darkness lowered her voice.

She then stood up, pulled herself together, and crossed her arms, which had the effect of emphasizing her chest.

“Recently, Megumin and you have been acting strangely. I was just worried that you two had crossed the line.”

Darkness said as she took large strides to the couch and sat down.

She then poured tea into her cup.

As if her heart had been relieved of a huge burden, Darkness happily drank her tea.

Feeling left out because of how much she was talking to herself, I softly muttered:

“...Yeah, well I don't want to hear that from someone who kisses other people without consent. I'm pretty normal compared to a perverted aristocrat lady.”

When she heard what I said, Darkness spat tea out her mouth.

“Hey...! What're you doing, you got it all over me!”

I took off my shirt, now soaked in tea, and started roughly shaking it.

“Cough! Cough cough! Cough...!”

Darkness stood up coughing and wiped her mouth with her handkerchief.

“W-Why you! What are you saying all of a sudden?! What an impudent accusation...! That's completely... baseless...”

Though she started out angrily yelling, Darkness gradually grew quiet.

Probably knowing full well what I was talking about, she averted her now teary eyes and coughed to the side.

“Oh, so you got what I meant, you pervert. Of course you did, you’re the one who does all sorts of strange things while panting heavily, after all! You always say things that aren’t suitable for children to hear, but when those things actually happen you get cold feet, don’t you? Hey, if you want to refute anything, then speak up!”

I said in an imitation of a certain someone’s tone. Darkness sat down on the couch with both palms on her face.

She was probably trembling from shame.

But after moving her hands away, her face showed a calm expression that was a bit red, but otherwise the same as usual.

In the past, she would’ve ran away and shut herself in her room by this point in our conversation. But over the long time we’d spent together, Darkness had grown.

She nonchalantly poured another cup of tea for herself, sipped it slowly, and said:

“It was my fault. I apologize for mistakenly labeling you as a sexual harasser. Also, I’ll act more like a lady from now on so... Please forgive me.”

“Oh, uh, sure... Sorry, I went too far. Let’s just forget about it...”

The Darkness who once was only capable of hiding her face and running off in shame had matured a little.

“By the way, there’s a package for you. It’s that crate beside the entrance.”

As if she were hiding something, Darkness drank her god knows how many cup of tea and changed the topic.

She might look calm on the surface, but on the inside she was probably wavering.

“Oho, so it came. I’ve been eating extravagant food full of experience points recently, so my level’s gone up. That’s why I ordered some new equipment, fit for a veteran adventurer... By the way, if you keep chugging tea like that you’ll be making friends with the toilet soon.”

“C-Couldn’t you say that more subtly...?”

While basking in Darkness' hateful gaze, I rummaged through the crate and took out some light yet solid gauntlets, leg guards, and chest armour.

"Oh, here it is! This looks great!"

I said while taking out the last thing in the crate, a rope.

——I had a skill named "Bind".

It'd become my main skill lately. If the skill went off successfully, and if the rope was tough enough, it could trap any opponent.

Its success rate seemed to be based off of Luck, so its mechanics were practically designed just for me.

I'd been using a special wire rope up till now, but knowing full well that an ounce of prevention was worth a pound of cure, I custom ordered a rope with the highest level of toughness.

This mythrill alloy rope could even bind astral bodies. It was an excellent product.

"Is that a bondage rope?! Th-That glow! Is it made out of mythrill!?"

While I was holding the rope with a satisfied expression on my face, I received an excited question from a pervert who'd start blushing as soon as she saw a custom-made rope.

And this pervert, who was enviously staring at the rope, started fidgeting.

"Erm... Kazuma, I'm deeply familiar with the Bind skill. So how about it, why not try out your new rope? And now that I think about it, I don't think I've ever experienced your Bind before. As fellow party members, isn't it important that I know how powerful my comrades' skills are?!"

The pervert kept alternating her gaze between my face and the rope.

"Didn't you just say that you'd "act more like a lady from now on"? And you should be able to tell that this is for binding super strong monsters. If you want a Bind so much, just use the thinner ropes in the cabinet."

I said that while moving to take out the ropes from the storage cabinet off to the side of the living room...

"No, it has to be this one! ...That is to say, this one will do. You say that it's for use against powerful monsters, but how useful will it be if it can't even stop me? Not very, I'd imagine. So try tying me up first."

The pervert stopped me as she said that, then gazed at me in anticipation with an excited, blushing face.

Even if she says that, I could restrain a powerful monster like the Kowloon Hydra with steel ropes a full grade lower than the one in my hand. There was no need to test anything.

But that pervert didn't even wait for an answer, she just stood in the living room with an excited look on her face.

"...By the way, didn't you just say 'it has to be this one'?"

"No I didn't."

"No, you definitely did."

"No I didn't. ...And that doesn't matter now, hurry up! Are you trying to tempt me by showing off that tough, hard, and heavy looking rope?"

Faced with a pervert who didn't give a damn about hiding her fetish, I reluctantly stood up.

I tugged at the rope to confirm its strength, then turned towards Darkness.

Incidentally, I took off my soaked shirt earlier, so right now I'm just wearing some shorts.

On the other hand, Darkness was wearing an open-collar shirt that accentuated her figure as well as a tight-fitting skirt. She looked more like a Japanese office lady than an aristocratic lady.

A bystander would probably find this pretty indecent.

Seeing me holding a rope with my upper body bare, Darkness' face took on an awkward expression.

"H-Hey, Kazuma, can you at least put a shirt on? Just thinking about being tied up by you in that get-up feels very unpleasant..."

"What the hell are you saying *now*?"

I held up the rope against this pervert who was completely beyond salvation in every possible way.

"It'll be a hassle, but I'll be using most of my mana to make Bind last longer. Then I'll throw you and your nonsense-spewing mouth off to the side."

"What?! So tying me up with a tough rope isn't enough for you, you want to throw me down to the ground too?! What about the ball gag? Won't you need one? What will you do if I end up screaming in pain from the bondage?"

"You're disgusting." "Bitch."

Like always, our team's pervert was in top form.

I should just tie her up and push her aside, then go check on Aqua and Megumin.

Or rather, go make their lives harder.

I pointed the ropes towards Darkness——

"Bind!!"

I shouted as I threw them.

The ropes in my hand flew toward Darkness and bound her up.

"Wha...! T-This...! Ugh... Ahhh?!"

The now bound-up Darkness shouted.

I was just as frozen as her.

Or to be more exact, I was totally spellbound.

Or to be even more exact, I was looking at something amazing.

“...Hah, hah... hah...! Wh-Why you...! Why are you always doing things that go beyond my wildest expectations...?!”

The rope tying Darkness up left her breasts completely untouched, which only accentuated them as she panted lewdly.

With both her hands bound, Darkness was weakly kneeling down on the carpet. It was probably because the binding was too strong.

Darkness was tied up from her shoulders to her waist. Her breasts were strongly emphasized as she lay collapsed on the floor with a burning blush on her face. She was so lewd that she wouldn't be out of place on the covers of *those* kinds of magazines.



This was bad.

Really bad.

If they saw Darkness like this, Aqua and Megumin would definitely stare at me with empty eyes.

This was so terrible it was beyond words.

I didn't plan to tie her up in a way that accentuated her chest. But considering how I always get panties when I use Steal on girls, and how Bind acted now, I got the feeling the skills I was learning were steadily deviating towards the dark side.

I squatted down and spoke to Darkness, who was squirming and panting hard.

"Hey, are you alright? I'm not sure how to put this, but I was actually holding back with that Bind..."

"This... is after you held back...?! Erm, Kazuma... Next time, I'll pay you. I'm willing to pay, so don't hold back."

Darkness uttered something stupid. And then...

I felt something coming from behind me.

This was probably an alarm from the Enemy Detection skill I'd been honing up till now.

It should only sense monsters or enemies with hostile intentions.

But this skill I'd been relying on all this time might be warning its master of impending danger.

I immediately followed my instincts...!

——I heard the sound of the door opening.

『Phew, that was exhausting. Let's take a break. Megumin, good work!』

『You say you're tired, but weren't you just playing with Emperor Zell the enti...
Hmm?』

And at the same time, I also heard the voices of Aqua and Megumin.

“Huff... huff... huff...”

Still tied up, Darkness roughly blew air into my hand.

『Kazuma and Darkness aren't around. Where did they go?』

Megumin's baffled voice sounded out.

『From what my clear eyes tell me, they must be playing board games in one of their rooms.』

So too did Aqua's voice as she ran off somewhere.

She probably went to check on Darkness' and my rooms.

The sound of earthenware clanking could be heard from the living room. Megumin was probably drinking tea on the couch.

I'd grabbed Darkness and hid into the cramped storage cabinet in the nick of time. I could feel the warmth of her body as I considered what to do next.

Actually, compared to the situation earlier, being discovered right now would be much worse.

Why did I even hide?

I didn't do anything wrong.

I just complied with Darkness' request.

...No, that's not true. I got excited after seeing Darkness' orgasmic expression.

I probably hid because I was feeling guilty.

It'll be fine, Megumin will understand.

Darkness wanting to be tied up should be within her range of expectations.

And me being topless should be a common sight.

...No, this wasn't going to work.

I leaned towards Darkness and whispered into her ears:

"Hey, Darkness, things only got this troublesome because you asked me to do something so weird! It'd be awkward if they saw us like this, you get that right?"

Hearing that, Darkness nodded with tears in her eyes.

What the hell, I feel like something similar to this has happened before.

Oh, right, when I sneaked into House Dustiness and pressed this girl down on her bed.

Why am I covering her mouth like I did back then?

"Alright, let's think about how we should handle this. Listen, I'm letting go, alright?"

I said as I moved my hand away...

"!? Ow! Y-You...! Why did you bite my hand, let go! That hurts, you moron!"

As I was planning to let go, I was bitten. I swung my hand side-to-side to shake Darkness' head off.

"What are you doing?! Look! There's teeth marks here!"

"... I can't... hold it... If I don't bite something..."

Darkness said something insane between sobs.

What was with this girl? I hope she doesn't gain any more traits.

As I was wondering if she was turning stranger because she was being pressured to her limits—

I realized the red on her face wasn't the lewd shade she had before.

It was a red of shame, as if she might cry at any moment.

“I want to go to the bathroom...”

“What did I tell you?! If you drink that much tea, you’ll be making friends with the toilet!”

Part 3

The scene was a cramped and dark storage cabinet.

The bound-up Darkness was turning red.

And it wasn't her usual blush of excitement.

"K-Kazuma... Ka- Kazuma...! What should I do, this is bad, this is truly bad! This isn't a joking matter anymore, this is awful...!"

Whispered Darkness, whose entire upper body was tied up.

This cabinet was so cramped that I was stuck right on top of her.

"This is all because you didn't listen and kept drinking tea! I've been thinking about this since we first met, but you're actually pretty dumb, aren't you?! Is your brain all muscle? Seriously, sometimes you're as dumb as Aqua!"

After hearing that, Darkness glared at me with gritted teeth.

It seemed like she wanted to say something, but I decided not to press her since this wasn't the time.

It'd be useless to lecture her here.

"I guess there's no other way... Let's get out of here and just talk things out. Megumin isn't an impulsive moron like you, she'll understand if we explain things to her. There'll be less trouble in long run if we just come out now."

"I want to have a nice, long chat with you about just how you see me, but that can wait. Erm... You might not know this, but I actually talk about all sorts of things when I'm alone with Megumin... A-Anyway, it would be bad if she saw us like this, so let's wait a bit more!"

Just what did they talk about when I wasn't around?

Now that I think about it, Megumin also mentioned that she talked about me a lot with Darkness.

“...No choice then. We’ll just have to wait a bit longer.”

“Hey, give me something to bite. I need to grit my teeth to endure this!”

I understood that the situation already looked pretty bad, but I still stuffed a handkerchief in place of a ball gag into Darkness’ mouth.

And then we waited in the dark storage cabinet.

I remembered that Aqua and Megumin said they were taking a break.

If that was the case, we just needed to wait for them to finish and leave.

The sound of someone running could be heard on the other side of the room.

“They’re not here. Putting aside the guy who revealed his hikkikomori powers after the festival ended and job changed to trash, even the person who was supposed to be keeping an eye on him is gone.”

I’ll remember this. Tonight, I’ll definitely modify her chicken coop.

I might have been idling my days away recently, but she’s still got guts to call me trash.

“What happened to them? It isn’t that strange for that lazy Kazuma to go loiter around somewhere, but Darkness vanishing without a word after I asked her to watch over him is strange...”

Did they really think I was some irresponsible person that would just wander and play around...

...Then.

“... Ugh! ...Ugh!”

Darkness groaned quietly as if she wanted to say something.

Now that I took a closer look, the sight of Darkness drenched in sweat, panting hard, and crammed inside a tiny storage closet was really lewd.

A drop of sweat fell from her neck.

Being in a situation like this inside a closed room was no joke... Woah!

“Hey, hey, what’re you doing? Don’t squirm around!”

I whispered to Darkness, who had started moving all of a sudden, and took the handkerchief out of her mouth.

“...Ah! I, I can’t...! It’s more serious than I thought...!”

“Come on, try harder! Those girls are just taking a break halfway through, they’ll get back to work before you know it!”

It’s all Darkness’ fault for not enduring things properly inside this cramped, hot storage cabinet. That’s why the two of us were drenched in sweat with our faces flushed, making things look even worse.

“Didn’t I tell you?! That’s why I said that it’d be better to just go out earlier, right!?”

“I, I’m sorry...! B-But...!”

I stuffed the handkerchief back into Darkness’ mouth without giving her the chance to say anything.

It might’ve been fine earlier, but with the way Darkness was now, I couldn’t let her go out.

The sweat was making her open-collared shirt stick to her body. Even if the two of them understood that nothing had actually happened, they’d still look at me with scorn for tying Darkness up in this kind of situation.

There was finally a good mood between Megumin and I, how could I let this moron spoil all my effort!

As I was thinking that, Darkness seemed to have reached her limit. She started struggling intensely below me, trying to break out.

I panickedly held her back and whispered in her ears:

“Hey, calm down! Things’ll be fine if you just hold it. In the end, it’s your fault for not listening to my advice! So stay still!”

Darkness listened to my words obediently, then closed her eyes in resignation.

It wouldn't be funny if we were discovered like this, so I took the handkerchief in Darkness' mouth out again and said:

"Hey, don't just close your eyes like that! Ugh, you were like this back when I sneaked into your mansion too, you give up way too easily at times like this! Listen up, I'll explain this to you since you're so dumb. If you charge out of the closet right now, it's going to be really awkward. If Aqua saw you, she'd definitely tell all the people in the guild, 'Breaking news! A topless Kazuma and a bound-up Darkness were hiding together in a storage cabinet, drenched in sweat! I'll let your imagination fill in the gaps!'. Yeah, something like that."

"Ugghhhh..."

As I listened to Darkness' sobbing groan, I used the remnants of my mana to cast Freeze and cool down my own overheating head.

The storage cabinet was stuffy, so Darkness looked at me enviously. But she didn't ask for a Freeze too.

She seemed to understand that it'd be dangerous if she were to suddenly cool down in a situation like this.

Then, squirming, Darkness said...

"...H-Hey Kazuma... Even though things are like this, I'm actually enjoying holding back my bladder. Am I weird?"

"Alright, just stop talking. Try to keep your mouth shut."

While I was scolding this hopeless pervert, the sound of a conversation came from outside the cabinet.

『What's going on? Megumin, how many amulets are you going to make? Are you planning to stuff Kazuma's bag till it's full or something?』

『No, these are for everyone. This one is Aqua's, this one's mine... And this one, the sturdiest, is for Darkness, who's always protecting us with her body.』

When she heard Megumin's touching words, Darkness stopped squirming.

...At that moment, Darkness' thoughts and mine were one.

We had to avoid disappointing Megumin by letting her see us like this.

Still right below me, Darkness whispered:

"... Hey, can't you think of a way to resolve this? Being quick-witted is one of your strong points, after all. Any ideas?"

Even if you say that——

I searched this storage cabinet that could barely fit two people to try and find if there was anything I could use.

...And I found something.

My luck really *was* great.

"Rejoice, Darkness! The biggest problem has been solved!"

I exclaimed as I showed Darkness what I found!

A beverage bottle.

"...! ...!!"

"C-Cut it out! Don't just headbutt me with no warning like that!"

She seemed unhappy about the bottle I was showing her.

"Tch... You're the one who asked if I have any ideas. I really can't handle this aristocratic lady with too much pride..."

When she heard my casual comment, Darkness lifted her head back up.

"Wait, what did you just say? I didn't reject it because of my pride as a noble, I rejected it because I'm a woman! My pride as a woman is something I can't give up! Where in the world are there people who would use this, you pervert?!"

“In my country, some of the fiercer people who work as security in their own homes would use plastic bottles similar to this when they couldn’t leave their post.”

“!?”

As we continued our idiotic conversation, opposite to us...

『——Hey, Megumin. You really look happy making those. I’m feeling happy too just watching you.』

Came Aqua’s leisurely voice.

『Of course. These amulets all hold my wish, that everyone will stay together forever... I’m grateful to you too, Aqua. Let’s always be together.』

『M... Megumin! This is... I’m so touched! I understand, I can’t go back to heaven anyways, so I’ll just ditch my job as a goddess and spend my time here happily! Kazuma will deal with the issue of money somehow, so let’s play together as much as we can and enjoy our time with everyone!’』

『So you’re still talking about goddesses and heaven? Well, fine, as long as we’re all together...』

And while they were having a cheerful and heartwarming conversation in the living room,

“I’ll be honest, I’ve always felt that you’re one erotic noble! You’ve got a slutty body and a seductive aura, but your defences are way too strong! But even though you have such a lustful body, you’re always shy about the weirdest things! What’s wrong with you? Are you a perverted slut or a pure and innocent maiden, make it clear! What’s with being both a virgin *and* a pervert you half-assed girl?!”

“Okay, I don’t like abusing the powers of a noble, but I’m not going to hold back against you! I’ll execute you for the crime of slandering a noble!”

Darkness, who was still curled up in a prone position inside the storage cabinet, was leaning my way with her hands still tied.

While keeping that posture, she kicked at me. And in this cramped space, I had no room to avoid.

“Go for it! Do it if you can, young lady! You’re just a crusader who can’t even beat an adventurer, the weakest job. Oh, so you want to rely on your daddy’s power just because you can’t beat me in a duel? Wow Lady Lalatina, you’re so cool!”

“Someone’s awfully cocky! As soon as those two leave, we’re dueling. I’ll kill you!”

“Did you actually just do that? To think an aristocratic lady would kick other people in the face, what kind of education did you have?! And even the way you speak changed, you sure are a young lady!”

“Ahh, st-stop! Don’t push my stomach! If I can’t hold it in, you’ll suffer too!”

The situation was dire, but we forgot about it and started quietly fighting.

Compared to the harmonious talking in the living room, it was clear how small-minded the two of us were.

『——Hey, did you hear a knocking sound?』

『Really? I didn’t hear anything. Anyway, let’s get back to work. How about we finish before dinner and eat some grilled meat? The two of them should be back by then.』

『Sounds great to me! Summer *is* barbecue season after all. And I want to drink some ice cold beer too! Let’s ask those two to buy the ingredients after they get back!』

Chatting cordially, the two of them left the mansion again.

And as soon as they did...

“I can’t believe *you* of all people are looking down on me! You’re just a meatshield whose only strong point is her eroticness! Why don’t I tell you your sole purpose in life?!”

“Bring it! You always get cold feet at critical moments like this, so do it if you can!”

Darkness and I forgot our original objective, and kept squabbling in the cramped storage cabinet even after Aqua and Megumin left.

——I panted hard as I dragged Darkness out of the storage cabinet and stood her up.

“Damn it, we wasted all that time because of something as stupid as that... What the hell are we doing... Forget it, just go to the bathroom already... Ugh, I’m tired, I’ll go take a nap in my room.”

Darkness looked at me with an equally tired face.

“Really, I’m the one who wasted my time here. Go and sleep then, you lazy bum. After I go to the bathroom, I’ll stay in my room until the Bind wears off. And after that, I’ll be having a serious match with you. I won’t stand for being underestimated so much, understand?”

With those words, she left for the toilet with her upper body still bound-up.

...This woman was *really*...

I hoped she could learn even the tiniest thing from the more magnanimous Megumin.

I watched Darkness walk unsteadily to the toilet, then headed to my room on the second floor.

When I climbed into bed with relief after overcoming that crisis, I heard a knocking sound on my door... Or rather, the sound of someone kicking it violently.

I opened the door curiously and was confused by the person I saw behind it.

It was a troubled Darkness on the verge of tears.

Did the incident just now bother her, so she came to apologize?

Arguments between people with low boiling points were a common sight in this house, there wasn’t any need to apologize now...

The moment I thought that, Darkness rubbed her thighs together said:

“P-Pardon me, Kazuma... san... Erm, I can’t use my hands to open the toilet door...”

Time for round two!

Part 4

The toilet nearest to my room was on the second floor.

It was pretty far away from the front door, so there'd be enough time to react even if Megumin and Aqua came back suddenly.

"Hurry up, hurry up! Oh no, this is really bad!"

Darkness, who looked as if she was about to cry, urged me.

She was probably asking me to hurry and open the toilet door.

...We just fought earlier, so I think I'll stall a little.

"What's really bad? Be clearer."

Darkness squirmed before the door.

"You, you, why you little...! Doing this kind of play at a time like this, just how accommodating are you acting for my sake...! Ahhh, really, it's my fault! I was wrong, okay, so help me open the door! I'm not in the mood to enjoy this play right now!"

She was on the verge of tears, and her breathing was very hard.

"No way around it, then. Oh, but I'll have to duel you after you solve your problem... Man, what a pain, just the thought of it is making my hand hesitate..."

Darkness glared at me as I refused to let the matter rest.

"...Jerk..."

"I went too far, sorry! Stop crying! Hey, that's cheating, it's cheating for a woman to cry!"

The teardrop rolling down Darkness' cheek made me open the door in a hurry.

However...

“...Enough. I’ll just let myself go here and then tell Megumin and Aqua all about this.”

“I was wrong! Really, it’s my fault! I was too arrogant and went too far! I apologized, so please forgive me!”

It was my turn to show a crying face as I backed away from the now open door.

After Darkness, whose hands were still tied, entered the bathroom, I closed the door and sighed in relief.

There won’t be any more problems now.

“Hey, Kazuma, my underwear! Oh no, I can’t take them off! Ahh damn it, this is... What should I do...!”

Darkness’ crying voice came from the toilet.

How did this even happen? These “extraordinary circumstances” that gave an excuse for everyone involved to walk away happy.

“Alright, leave it to me. I’ll take them off for you.”

As soon as she saw me open the door, Darkness yelled out in panic.

“Hey, wait, wait! ...Ugh, damn, isn’t there any other way... Hey, Kazuma, at least shut the window curtain! If it’s a little darker, it won’t be that bad...!”



「おいカズマ、せめてトイレの窓に
掛かっているカーテンを閉めてくれ！」

❁ ダクネス ❁

I see.

However...

“Sorry, but I have a skill called Farsight...”

“Aghhh, really, why are things so convenient for you?! But I guess that’s why you’re so reliable during crises, so thank you very much!”

Having fallen into confusion, Darkness, who had started crying for no reason, gave up and thanked me.

She must be at her limit.

At that moment, inspiration struck Darkness, and her expression brightened up.

“Steal! Kazuma, use Steal on me from across the door! Your sexual harassment-styled Steal will definitely snatch my underwear! You’ll end up seeing my underwear, but that’s much better than you reaching directly into my skirt and taking them off!”

I see, that was a good idea.

However...

“I used most of my mana on your Bind, and after casting Freeze in the storage cabinet, I’m completely out.”

“I take back what I said about you being ‘reliable during crises’ and my thanks! Aaaahh, really, you’re so...!!”

In the the end, the plan turned into me tugging her panties down a little, then Darkness doing the rest against a wall.

The sound of friction was bothering me a lot, but I didn’t have to stay here any longer.

But just when I was about to leave,

“K-Kazuma! Kazuma, wait, don’t go! It, it’s not coming out...! What should I do, it’s not coming out...!”

Darkness' pained voice came from inside.

No, that's not something I could help her with.

Her body probably wasn't working well because she held it in too long.

So, the only thing I could do was...!

I clapped my hands in a light beat and yelled:

"Go, go Darkness—— Go, go Darkness—— You can do it, Darkness——"

"Moron, what are you thinking?! It's the paper! I can't pull any toilet paper out!"

Oh, so that's what she meant. Well, it was an easy mistake to make.

The toilet paper in this world was usually made of things like rags or low-grade paper.

Paper in this world was expensive, after all.

If I remember correctly, only the richest of the rich used real toilet paper.

While wondering what the point of pulling out toilet paper was when she couldn't use her hands anyway, I shouted:

"I'm opening the door then!"

"What door?"

Before I'd realized it, Megumin and Aqua were standing before the toilet.

"——Really, that's so dumb of you two... We've stayed together this long, we wouldn't misunderstand even if we saw that."

Said Megumin exasperately. She'd understood everything after a simple explanation.

I really wish the other two would learn from her comprehension and sensibility.

Darkness slumped her body and muttered quietly when she saw Megumin.

“Ughh... I have no words...”

“Also...”

Started Megumin, as she passed amulets to Darkness and Aqua.

“Also, messing around randomly like this is just our style, isn’t it?”

She smiled happily from the bottom of her heart.

Darkness and I smiled naturally too...

But this warm and harmonious atmosphere was frozen by Aqua, who just couldn’t read the mood.

“By the way, did you make it in time?”

Though I was curious about that too.

Part 5

That night.

“She’s still not here yet...”

Megumin said she’d be coming to my room tonight, so I was anxiously waiting there.

Steeling my heart, I bought some expensive wine for Aqua, the one who’d been spoiling my plans lately.

As for Darkness, I bought high grade Manatite, cast a powerful Bind on her, then knocked her down in her room.

With the way she was shouting about how much she should pay for this play while squirming around with a flushed face, she probably wouldn’t be able to move till morning.

As I was waiting uneasily, I heard a soft knock.

“Kazuma, are you there?”

“Oh, of course! Pl-Pl-Please come in!”

I was so nervous I started stuttering, but it seemed that Megumin was the same.

She was hugging the motionless Chomusuke to her chest, maybe in place of a pillow.

She gulped after entering my room.

“P-Pardon the intrusion... By the way, this is the first time I’ve come to your room at this hour.”

“Y-Yeah, that’s right! Even though we’ve lived under the same roof for over a year!”

Megumin didn’t get right to the point, she looked around my room instead.

It was good that she was interested in the things in my room, but it’d be bad if she discovered *that* by accident. I hoped she wouldn’t touch anything inside my closet.

Megumin, who seemed a little unnerved, fell into silence.

Both of us felt a little awkward, so the silence continued for a while.

“I came at a time like this in order to tell you about that thing I mentioned before...”

Megumin seemed to have made up her mind. She hugged Chomusuke in her arms a little tighter.

She didn’t pay any attention to how weak Chomusuke was. Even her ears were turning red, and a crimson gleam was shining in her eyes...!

“What I want to tell you is...”

“What you want to tell me is?!”

I gulped and unconsciously leaned closer.

“Y-You’re too close, Kazuma! Hold on, there’s no need to rush!”

“I’m not anxious about this, and the distance doesn’t matter, just keep going!”

I urged her onwards.

“What I want to tell you is... T-That’s right! I-It’s about this little guy!”

Megumin said as she handed Chomusuke over to me...

“...Huh?”

“I wanted to tell you this guy’s true identity in secret.”

Wait...!

“No you didn’t! You already came this far, you wimp! You keep talking about how incompetent I am and how I always get cold feet, but you’re a total wimp yourself!”

“I-I never said you were incompetent! And I really did want to tell you about this guy!”

“Liar! Megumin, you’re such a liar! You should be talking about something sweeter, why’d you leave me stewing in anticipation for so long?!”

After trying to push Chomusuke over to me, Megumin forced the topic with a flushed face.

“I never told you this before, but actually, this guy isn’t a normal cat.”

“I knew that already! I saw this thing breath fire and fly!”

“...What are you talking about? It might not be a cat, but that doesn’t mean it can breath fire or fly.”

“I’ve been saying it all this time, I saw it! D-Don’t look at me with pity like that! Ah, whatever, it’s fine either way!”

That’s right, instead of this cat of unknown origin, the matter of Megumin’s heart was much more important.

“Think carefully, isn’t there’s something else you want to tell me?! Hurry up and muster some courage!”

“Ughh...”

Megumin backed away towards the door bit by bit, while I just as gradually moved towards her.

“Just say it! You’ve already said most of it, haven’t you?! You’ve already told me several times that you like me or you love me or something!”

“I didn’t mention love at all, don’t exaggerate!”

Feeling pressured by me, Megumin wasn’t just blushing out of agitation, even her eyes had a crimson glow.

She looked like she wanted to say something, but she swallowed it back.

In the end, she forcefully stuffed Chomusuke into my hands and said:

“You already did all of those things with Darkness during the day, how immoral are you?! Please just sleep with this guy for now!”

After countering with that line, she dashed out of my room.

During the day she acted like she didn’t care, but wasn’t she actually slightly bothered after all?

Sleep with this guy for now, did that mean that one day I could sleep with someone aside from this little guy? Wait, no, the more important thing was...!

“You left me hanging again aaaaaggghhhh!”

CHAPTER 2

GIFTING THE SLACKING ADVENTURERS WITH GROWTH!

Part 1

“.....”

Aqua sat on the rug with her arms around her knees as she looked at me.

Why was this girl staring at me intently since morning?

From my relationship with Megumin and Darkness, this was my period of popularity, did this one fell for me too?

Could this be the eyes of a woman who likes a man?

I laid on the couch lazily and said to Aqua:

“... Why are you staring at me. Ah, you want this? You want to drink too?”

I said as I drank the entire champagne-like thing in my hand.

I wasn't sure if I should describe it as fizzy or bubbly, the taste was weird.

According to Aqua, this wine was rather good, but I had no idea how since I didn't know how to appreciate wine.

That might be so, but getting to drink such expensive wine in the morning was a privilege of the winners in life.

Aqua who was staring at me said:

“... After the festival ended, Kazuma has become a bum on an amazing level.”

Ara, so those weren't eyes of admiration, but the gaze of someone looking at a bum.

But the me right now won't waver or get angry because of something she said.

This was the magnanimity of a man who owns a huge mansion and made enough money to play an entire lifetime at such a young age.

"Hey Aqua, what are you talking about. I am a successful man okay? What's wrong with living a life that befits my station? I have so much money in the bank that I can live off just the interest alone alright? Doing work is stupid. I will go adventuring when I am in the mood, and just play the rest of the time."

After listening to what I said, Aqua mumbled 'Oh I see'.

She then picked up the champagne I placed on the table.

"What you said seemed to be true. I will have some high class Neroid too."

"... Isn't that champagne?"

"It's Neroid. There are no carbonic acid in this world. Basically, all carbonated beverages have Neroid mixed in."

Aqua said as she went to fetch a glass.

Darkness and Megumin came over next.

... They were all dressed up and ready to go adventuring.

Darkness wore her full armour and Megumin held her usual staff.

When I saw this.

"Doing your daily explosion? Be careful on your trip. By the way, can you buy dinner on the way back? I will give you the money after. I want something fried tonight."

I said to them while I laid on the couch.

Megumin and Darkness stared at me.

That's the eyes of someone looking at a guy they love.

“... Darkness, what should we do about this man who is drinking wine idly so early in the morning?”

“... Let’s find a place and throw him out.”

Hmm?

... Guess I was wrong again.

Those were gaze of someone looking at a guy they no longer love.

“You people are really... I will make this clear, I don’t need to work anymore. Why do people work? To make money right? But I have secured enough wealth to splurge my entire life. Then what’s wrong with indulging myself for the rest of my life? I am not bothering anyone.”

I said as I snacked on the peas that goes with the wine.

Darkness sighed deeply.

“How pitiful... Not working because you have money? If everyone thought that way, the world wouldn’t function properly. Even if you have enough money to mooch off for your entire life, it is your obligation as a person to contribute to the world.”

I mumbled to Darkness who said those grand words:

“You nobles spend your days in the same way too.”

“I-Insolent! Don’t look down on nobles! You might think we are not doing anything, but the nobles are giving their all so the people can live peacefully. You have the power to do something for the citizens too right? Don’t just think about the money, how about doing it for the people you love. Even just defeating monsters that are a threat to humanity would be better than idling here...”

I turned my back to Darkness who was saying such grand things and buried my face into the back of the couch.

“Ah!”

Darkness shouted when she saw that, but I ignored her.

In her long aristocratic life, this was probably the first time she was treated this way in the middle of a passionate speech.

My name is Satou Kazuma.

A man who will not bend before authority.

When Darkness who was part of the authoritative class told me to work, it was my obligation to resist defiantly.

Darkness was probably infuriated by my attitude and took large strides my way.

She then pulled the back of my shirt.

“Kazuma, enough talk, let’s go. Your skills will dull if you laze around every day. Let’s go together and... T-This guy! Hey, let go! Stop resisting!”

Darkness was serious about dragging me out as I grabbed onto the couch tightly...!

At this moment, Megumin stopped her.

“It’s fine Darkness, leave it to me... Kazuma, do show us your energetic side some times. Can you let me see your cool and reliable face during a crucial moment?”

Megumin squatted beside me as I was grabbing on to the couch, and smiled gently.

I glanced at her.

“.....”

Then turned my head to the couch again and grabbed on.

“Huh!?”

Megumin uttered a sound as if she suffered a heavy blow.

My name is Satou Kazuma.

A man who will not lose sight of the true nature of things because of a moment of impulse.

I won't give in so easily, even if it was Megumin where things has been progressing nicely.

My schedule for the day is very tight. For example, I will drink until I'm slightly dizzy and sleep until evening, then go walk around at night after dinner.

I held on to the couch tightly and looked at the two of them in such a position.

"... Monsters are a threat to humans so we subjugate them when they are discovered, but those that are beneficial to us are left alone. I hate such an arrogant way of thinking. Human are intelligent beings. We can treat them in a gentler manner. I hope you two can remember the kindness you have when you were a child too."

After telling the two of them that, I picked up a pea and popped it into my mouth, then turned to the back of the couch again...

"W-When you were deep in debts, you were also looking for high bounty monsters with bloodshot eyes!? Don't just spout pretty words during such moments!"

"That's right! Recently, you are so keen on buying the high class food Onion Ducks because they could raise your levels without any effort, and you dare say this now!? Darkness, you pull that side! Let's pry him away!"

Darkness grabbed my legs while Megumin stuck closely to my back and grabbed my waist in an attempt to peel me off the couch.

I felt the body warmth of Megumin on my back and said:

"Hey, stick your chest closer to my back. If you do that, my hands that are holding on to the couch might loosen a little."

"You are the worst! This guy is really the worst! Darkness, let's tie him up and drag him to the guild!"

"H-How about we really find a place and dump this guy there...?"

The two of them said as they attempted to pry me away from the couch.

At this moment, Aqua came over with a tray in hand, with an empty glass, simple snacks and something like a lime on it.

“... Is this a new game? Tell me the rules.”

“That’s not it! We are talking about taking on a subjugation quest together. But Kazuma is throwing a fit and says he is not going... And Aqua, don’t get poisoned by this man too...”

Darkness showed a troubled expression when she saw the tray that Aqua was holding.

... Saying I am poisonous is rude. Or rather, Aqua has always been like this.

Aqua tilted her head, then picked the lime on the tray and popped it into her mouth. She showed a really sour face.

“Is that so? I don’t mind going, but I think it would be really difficult to drag Kazuma out of the mansion, who is in his scum hikkikorimori mode after the festival ended. How about leaving the Kazuma who is the weakest and has the worst job at home, and go by ourselves?”

——She said something I couldn’t ignore.

I jumped up because of Aqua’s unintentional words.

“... Hey, you have guts to say that, Aqua-san who has a top tier job. Think about it logically, I am the strongest one in the team. You are still saying I have the weakest job? Even though it is meaningless to compare who is strong and who is weak as we perform different functions in the team, but it still irks me when the weakest top tier job holder says that about me.”

I turned around and decided to make this point clear.

Aqua was making a very sour face, but she still popped a second lime into her mouth.

“Ara, so Kazuma, you think you are the strongest one here? Your skills might be convenient, and can take down people like Darkness easily with Drain Touch... But have you forgotten? A lich skill like Drain Touch will only work if I am not paying attention. You really think you can do anything to me?”

“Hey wait, I am not that weak. In order to defend against Drain Touch and magic attacks, I strengthened my resistance against abnormal status and increased my magical defence...”

Aqua who had a lime in her mouth said such provocative words.

I would be an idiot if I fall for her taunt.

It might be moronic, but I still need to settle this.

“Hey Aqua, you think I am a man with just one weapon, Drain Touch? She might be tough, but a mob character like Darkness whose attack can’t hit is no match for me anyway. I am the great Kazuma who can use all kinds of skills okay? I have all sorts of spells and skills, including long distance sniping and close quarter sword attacks. You think you stand a chance?”

“Hey! Even if I can’t hit anything, I am confident of my stamina and endurance! If I drag out the battle, I won’t lose to you...!”

Aqua’s twitched her brow when she heard me.

She then placed the tray on her hand onto the table.

“Ara ara, looks like you are misunderstanding something, Kazuma-san. My job might be an arch priest, but with my high stats, I can take on any jobs I wish except for mages okay? You can use swords a little? Use bows a little? If I cast support magic on myself and fought hand to hand with you, Kazuma won’t even last a minute okay? Ah, also...”

Aqua flicked her long blue hair and continued confidently:

“I remember you learned something like bind right? Regrettably, only people on Darkness’ standard would be caught by that skill. I have a spell called ‘break spell’ that can negate all magic and skills. I have spent a long time with you Kazuma, you think your little tricks would work on me?”

“Hey... It’s true that I can’t move if I get hit by bind. However... By the way, if you can do that Aqua, shouldn’t you have use that spell when I was bounded earlier...”

I said unhesitantly to Aqua who was showing a fearless smile.

“... Alright, let’s have a match.”

In the corner of my eyes, Megumin was patting the shoulders of Darkness whose face had turned red and has become depressed.

Part 2

The Adventurer Guild I had not visited for so long.

How long had it been?

I saw a few familiar faces, and they waved at me when they saw me.

I walked pass the blonde delinquent who laid drunkenly on the table in broad daylight, and headed for the notice board where the requests were pasted.

Aqua who was beside me stared at the notice board, searching for a prey suitable for our match.

We couldn't just fight like that, so we decided to compete to see who could hunt more monsters.

Megumin was the judge.

It was a bit hard for Aqua who didn't have a weapon to fight monsters bare handed, so a Darkness was given to her.

Darkness who was given as a complementary gift was about to cry.

As it was a match of numbers, it was better to choose monsters that were great in numbers.

As it wasn't their breeding period yet, toads doesn't surface often, and would be subjugated in no time if they did.

In that case, a suitable quest would be...

At this moment, I heard Aqua mumbled:

"... Subjugating a pair of Manticore. A request to repel a subtype of wyvern building its nest on a rocky mountain... They all lack impact..."

Looks like i have to be the one to decide the quest.

... And then, I saw a notice.

‘Subjugation of rookie killer and goblins’

—— Rookie Killer, a monster had some fate with us.

It was said that only those who defeat this strong enemy could be called mid level adventurers, an adversary that gave me a hard fight in the past.

But our levels were no longer that of a rookie.

And we fought enemies stronger than rookie killers several times.

This was a revenge match.

I was already a veteran adventurer, but I have yet to defeat this fellow.

I tore down the notice and showed it to them.

The three of them frowned immediately with reluctance.

They probably had a deep psychological trauma because of it.

When they joined another team, it took them everything they had to escape from this monster.

“This thing will use a weak group of monsters as bait to lure in rookie adventurers right? We will compete and see who can kill the most number of goblins that is protected by this thing. Also... the one who defeats the rookie killer will win huge bonus points alright? We are already veterans... How about we show it who is boss?”

After hearing what I said.

The three of them smiled confidently this time.

—— The place where the rookie killer was sighted.

It was a forest that was rather far from town.

A zone where there wasn't enough trees to call it a forest, a group of armed demi-humans seemed to be there — goblins.

A Rookie Killer seemed to be around the area protecting them.

The sly monster that uses the weak goblin that gives high bounty as bait for rookie adventurers doesn't seem to be around.

"The goblins are here! I can kill an enemy of this level in a second with my God Blow!"

As Aqua said, these goblins are digging at the roots of the trees to unearth yam like things, or hitting the fruits hanging on the trees as they forage for food.

Goblins which were the mascot character for monsters were performing such actions.

We hid in the shade of the trees to observe them, and slowly close in on them.

But there were only three goblins.

I said to the confident Aqua beside me.

"Weren't you helpless against the toads in the past?"

"The rubbery stomach of the toads can absorb impact. Everything in this world has compatibility you know? Kazuma, you don't even know that? Are you stupid?"

I pulled Aqua's cheek and made her show a face on the verge of tears.

The goblins seemed to have noticed us.

Damn it, it's all because of the noise from doing dumb things.

Two of the goblins looked fearful when they saw us fully armed, but still took a stance.

The remaining goblin let loose a piercing scream.

It's better to finish them before the rookie killer showed up.

As I was thinking about that——

“Alright. Goblin subjugation, begin!”

Megumin gave the signal and move a distance away from us.

“Watch carefully Kazuma! It’s just three goblins, I will finish them off easily!”

Aqua rambled noisily as she charged into the goblins excitedly.

Her body was glowing faintly, probably because she casted some support spells on herself.

Darkness chased after Aqua in her heavy gear, her armour clanking loudly.

I watched them go casually, then raise my bow...!

Shooo!

“Ahh!” x2

I sniped the head of the goblin that was about to attack Aqua.

As Aqua and Darkness were stunned...!

“Eeek!?”

“Yaahhh!”

I was 20 meters away from the goblins.

From this distance, I couldn’t miss if I use my sniping skill.

Aqua and Darkness charged first, but I finished off the three goblins before them.

“Hey Kazuma! What is the meaning of this, killing the goblins I was about to kill!?”

Aqua started harassing me.

“If I kill off the monsters you laid your eyes on first, I will never lose.”

Aqua and Darkness yelled at the same time.

“Despicable!” x2

—— Dashing through the trees.

“Ah wait! I saw a shadow there! You can’t escape from my eyes, Kazuma!”

I listened to the voice behind me.

“Stealing my prey every time! How annoying! Come out and fight properly!”

As I searched aimlessly in the forest.

The score right now was me 8, my opponent 0.

I hid behind them with Hide and stole their kills happily. The two of them drew in the goblins while I Sniped from a safe spot.

I adopted a perfect tactic, but my two opponents got mad for unknown reasons, and were chasing me around in circles.

Resorting to violence just because they couldn’t win, how despicable.

I couldn’t shake Darkness who was wearing heavy armour off my tail. She was probably strengthened by Aqua’s support spell.

It didn’t feel much usually, but it was troublesome when support spells were casted on the enemy.

As I escaped using my Hide skills, I spilled water on the floor with magic, and froze them.

I then turned off my hide for a moment.

This might be a primitive trap, but...

“Ah, I found you Kazuma! You are just standing there motionlessly, brace yourself.... Uwah!”

“T-There you are Kazuma! Hah... Hah... I-I will get my revenge today!”

I said to the two who slipped on the ice and fell hard ——

“Serves you right ahhh!”

I mocked them loudly, and Aqua jumped up fiercely when she heard that.

“Darkness, let’s surround this man! Beat him up! Surround him and give him a good beating!”

After hearing Aqua’s words, Darkness got up clumsily from the frozen ground.

“... We chased so hard but is getting hit one sidedly... It is vexing but... I think it’s not bad too. Am I weird...”

Yes you are.



“... Really, what are you all doing. Don’t forget about hunting goblins.”

When I heard what Megumin said, I activated my detect enemy skill and scanned for goblins in the vicinity...

“So you are not running any more, Kazuma. Anyway, apologize. I will think about how to punish you later, you Hikkikorimori dog!”

“Wait, we are surrounded.”

That was expected.

After all, we had been yelling as we chased each other for so long, that was like advertising to them ‘please attack us’.

After hearing what I said, Aqua and Darkness seemed to realize this wasn’t the time to play around.

I could see goblins between the trees.

There were more than ten, not a number I could handle by myself.

On top of that...

“It’s here.”

The goblins surrounded us from afar.

A black beast seemed to be announcing that it was their protector as it walked towards us from the middle of the goblins with lots of swagger.

—— Rookie Killer.

We will defeat this thing that has some history with us and become veteran adventurers glamorously.

Even though we were in the midst of quarreling, our thoughts were in sync.

Darkness went in front to pull all the aggro to herself.

She took position at the most prominent position, and used her 'Decoy' skill, turning herself into bait.

"Alright Kazuma, I will reluctantly cast buffing spells on you."

Aqua said as she cast magic onto me.

My body emitted light immediately, and I could feel my physical abilities increasing.

Alright, this would work.

Darkness was on defence, Aqua took care of healing.

And I was responsible for dealing damage.

Each of us had our own job.

There was no need to decide who was the strongest.

I should reflect on this for letting the heat get to my head.

I nocked an arrow onto my bow and stood to the back right of Darkness.

"Don't worry, I won't misfire onto your back. I will be counting on you, Darkness."

"I am the one counting on you. I won't let any of them pass, I will leave the attacking to you."

Darkness stabbed her great sword onto the ground, using it to steady her footing and face forward, saying all that without turning back.

Just looking at that reliable back made me feel that it wouldn't be a problem no matter what kind of powerful enemy assault us.

"I will heal if you are hurt Darkness, so don't worry! Go, we will definitely take out that beast this time!"

Aqua who retreated to the back left of Darkness puffed her chest out as if she was saying 'this formation is invincible'.

I turned to Megumin and said:

“Hey Megumin. You said at the mansion earlier that you want to see my amazing performance, and my cool side during crucial moments right? I will show it to you, if we work together, no matter who the enemy...”

“Explosion!!”

With a loud boom, the shock wave radiated out to the surroundings.

Before I finished my cool lines, she abruptly unleashed her spell. That overly brutal violence wasn't satisfied with just pulling the goblins and the rookie killers in.

Darkness who was at the fore of the formation was blown away despite her heavy armour and sticking her sword onto the ground to stabilize herself.

Even me who was behind her couldn't do anything about the shockwave and was pressed onto the ground.

... Lying facedown to the ground, I lifted my head and looked towards the miserable sights.

The goblins and Rookie Killer were gone.

Darkness probably hit her head when she was blown away, and was motionless on the ground with her eye whites showing.

“Bleh... bleh... my mouth is full of sand...”

Aqua who was lying prone next to me whimpered.

And beside me, the mastermind who created all this mess was lying on her back.

The culprit said without remorse:

“I couldn't resist the instinct of the Crimson Magic of stealing the limelight. Now, it is confirmed that I am the strongest in the team right?”

“Why you! I was thinking that you were really docile recently, then you pull this stunt! Aren't you the judge!?”

Part 3

In one of the days where we were spending our time as usual.

The morning rays shone through the window, and the dust in the air sparkled.

“It’s a rare sight seeing you up at such an hour. What’s the occasion? Going on a quest?”

In this refreshing morning, Darkness was holding a book as she drank tea at the dining table. She sounded surprised as I descended the stairs to the living room.

“I just haven’t slept yet. It’s hot nowadays after all. During such times, it would be best if I made the room really cold and sleep until evening.”

“I-Is that so. It’s great that you are the same as usual. By the way, it is the same as the time you went to that mission, recently, you didn’t do any maintenance of your weapons and armour at all. You have lost the bearing of an adventurer completely.”

To be frank, I think I was looking less like an adventurer as the days passed.

“Personally, I think it’s fine even if I retire. The next step would be working as a merchant of sorts, living an easy life from the margins I make in business.”

“Will it kill you to not utter nonsense periodically? I have never heard of anyone retire from adventuring in their teens without taking an arrow to the knee.”

Megumin who was sipping on her after meal tea said resignedly.

Ignoring what she said, I pulled out the newspaper sticking out from the mailbox at the entrance.

“Whatever. In the end, an accomplished adventurer like me will read the newspaper and take note of world events while recharging my batteries, this is for the good of the town.”

I sat on the couch and flipped the newspaper open as I said that——

“Hey Kazuma, let me read it first. I just want to read the comics. I am curious what happened to Jack Frost who was chasing after the abducted snow fairies in the last issue.”

“Wait, I am curious about that comic too. I came downstairs just for that, alright?”

Megumin was dumbstruck as she watch Aqua and I fighting over the comics, as if she had something to say.

At this moment, I saw a piece of news.

“‘The Demon King Army Boss moved to the frontlines, the battle is intensifying. The capital is in danger’ ——? Hey, that’s dangerous. Will my sister Iris be okay?”

“Don’t treat Princess Iris as your sister, you impudent fool! —— Crisis in the capital? Let me read that.”

I handed the newspaper to Darkness, who read it with an expression more serious than ever before.

“It seemed the forward fortress near the capital is being attacked by a Boss of the Demon King Army. The paper says that the Boss is an evil god that can use terrible spells.”

“Huh!?”

Megumin stood up when she heard Darkness’ words.

“What’s the matter Megumin? Ahh, the term evil god must have tugged your heart strings. After all, you did say something stupid about you being an evil god in your past life.”

“I am probably an evil god in my previous life but that’s not what I want to talk about! It’s that I probably know that evil god...”

Right then, Aqua who snatched the newspaper from Darkness to read the comics frowned unhappily.

“I don’t know what this evil god is, but anyone proclaiming to be a god will receive divine retribution.”

“Aren’t you proclaiming to be a goddess too?”

As I took on Aqua who threw the papers my way and pounced on me, Megumin picked up the newspaper and said softly:

“The Demon King Army Boss who changed the battle drastically, evil god Wolbach—
—”

Part 4

The next morning.

During the cool night, when I was about to snuck into my blanket and sleep, someone who disturbed my blissful time came.

“Kazuma, are you awake? The sun just rose, so you should be right? Come, let’s go to the capital together Kazuma! It’s now time for us to make an appearance!”

Megumin who was in high spirits early in the morning opened my door.

I poked my head out of the blanket and said:

“... Are you acting up again? Just having a weird name and acting weirdly are enough. What do you want to do in the capital? I’m not bragging, but it will be terrible if I go to the capital. I can’t say why, but if I can go to the capital, I would have moved there already and be near my sister.”

“You are talking nonsense about your sister or something... No, forget about that. That’s right, this concerns your sister Iris! If this goes on, she will be in danger! Kazuma, is this the extent of your love for your sister!?”

When I heard Megumin saying such unexpected passionate words, I couldn’t help sitting up.

“I thought your relationship with Iris is bad, but that’s not actually true is it? You are talking about the news on the papers yesterday huh. I will be lying if I say I am not worried about Iris, but the opponent is a Boss. Even if I go...”

And it’s an evil god on top of that.

It’s nothing like the Bosses we fought so far, and have the feeling of being a final Boss.

I knew the capability of that person proclaiming to be a goddess, so it might not be a big deal.

When she heard what I said, Megumin said something unrealistic with ragged breath:

“I am very bothered by the Boss of the Demon King Army known as an evil god. You see, didn’t I told you about Chomusuke’s true identity last time? I think Chomusuke is that evil god, although that’s just my gut feeling.”

“I just saw that evil god of yours being chased around by a chick.”

Megumin said with a serious expression to me who completely refused to believe her:

“I am not asking you to fight with the Demon King Army Boss, Kazuma. Please, I need to resolve this, so you just need to accompany me and stay by my side.”

“Absolutely not, why must I go to such a dangerous place? Do you really understand? Just being in the frontlines is dangerous, and on top of that, the enemy is the evil god? It’s not something like the slime or undead we faced alright? Evil god is in the realm of final bosses.”

In response to my immediate answers——

“... I know, I already know Kazuma will say that. We did spend so much time together after all. I already understand this very well before we took the Rookie Killer quest.”

Megumin’s cheek blushed a little and she looked at me who was sitting on my bed.

“Really, it can’t be helped, how about this. If Kazuma comes with me... Erm, when everything is settled, I will spend a night in your room...”

After she said that in a barely audible voice, she pulled down her hat to cover her face shyly.

“Alright alright. I want to sleep now, we can discuss this tomorrow.”

“Huh!?”

Maybe she was really confident, my reply hit her really hard and her face was stiff.

My answer was probably out of her expectation, and Megumin started panicking.

“W-Wait. I just said something incredible with really deep resolve.”

“... How many times did you think I had been fooled? You think that I am that easy to tackle? Just like Darkness who wanted me to fight a high bounty monster with just a kiss, you all overestimate yourselves too much.”

“!?”

Megumin's expression turned stiff with surprise.

“Don't think I am a normal virgin in puberty. You two might have the looks, but your personality are a huge minus. If you are aware of that, then you should provide better service.”

After what happened recently that night, I won't be fooled again.

After hearing my firm reply, Megumin started trembling.

“What, you are still holding a grudge about that night!? Even though Kazuma was so eager recently when I flirt with you a little, and you are putting on a strong front now!”

“I-I-I'm not that eager you are just imagining it! When did I ever say I that I have a thing for you!?”

Men were creatures that would fall for the other party when they see the girls express interest in themselves.

That's right, that was the condition I was recently.

I was almost tricked, but I am not such a simple man.

She was just part of the regrettable girl series who only got looks.

“You are really the worst! What do you mean by that!? Did you plan to spend the night with a girl you don't like in the slightest!? You were so excited back then!”

“T-T-That's not it moron, I thought there would be some kind of trick back then and never expected anything from the start, don't think too highly of yourself you Loli!”

Megumin became agitated and pounced on me!

—— After Megumin and I strangled each other for a while, my head was completely clear and I gave up on sleeping, opting to lie on the couch to read the papers today.

“Kyouya Mitsurugi is number three in the adventurers ranking? What kind of joke is this, that trash is ranked so high but I am unranked! Which news company published this, I want to protest!”

Darkness who was cuddling Emperor Zell together with Aqua showed a taunting smile and said to me who was raging about being unranked:

“That’s the ranking for adventurers who are active in the capital, it’s impossible for someone like you who shut himself in this town to make it. The only way to make the rankings is to be active in the frontlines alright? How about going there to help? I am bored with all the paperworks I had to do recently, and don’t mind coming along okay?”

Seems like this girl was in cahoots with Megumin.

After Darkness made her obvious taunts ——

“That’s right, what Darkness said is true. You want to make the rankings? Want to be famous? Then let’s head to the battlefield! And defeat the Boss of the Demon King Army!”

Megumin grabbed the opportunity and said.

I ignored them, and threw the topic to Aqua who was attempting to train Emperor Zell by saying ‘Shake! Emperor Zell shake!’ but was pecked in the hand.

“Hey Aqua, talk some sense to these two. They said they want to protect the fortress at the frontline. We never meet anything good when we went on trips, but they have yet to learn this lesson at all. You oppose fighting the Boss of the Demon King Army right?”

Unlike the two who were all hyped up about fighting powerful foes, this girl who was just like me definitely understood my thinking.

But my assumption was overturned by unexpected words.

“I’m okay with that. The Boss of the Demon King Army is troubling others right? How could the beautiful and impartial Aqua-sama abandon the people in the mortal world who are seeking salvation?”

What wrong with this girl, did she eat something wrong?

Megumin and Darkness were surprised too, and looked at Aqua worryingly.

“What’s with you all of a sudden. Normally, you are the first one to refuse in tears when we encounter such things.”

“That’s only natural, monsters that could be seen anywhere don’t require my presence right? The opponent this time is an evil god, an arrogant being that dare proclaim to be a god without even sending me a greeting. As the founder of the Axis cult, I have to teach him a lesson.”

Looking at Aqua who was sprouting the lines of a delinquent whose territory had been disturbed, I felt that things were really bad.

“I won’t do it, definitely not. The opponent is always a boss of the Demon King Army, who can take on such a thing? In the end, there are tons of adventurers more powerful than us right? Why not leave the capital to those guys? Why are you so eager to seek your death?”

“Don’t be stubborn and accept your fate, don’t be so difficult. It will be fine, I will finish it in one shot! You don’t need to worry this time, just come along just in case!”

“Don’t you think our formation don’t have an ‘in case’? Think about all our past experiences, if you are sure there won’t be any problems then go! ... Hey, don’t look away, look at me!!”

I grabbed the chin of Megumin who turned her face away, trying to force her face this way even if I need to do it forcefully. At this point.

The door at the entrance opened after a timid knock.

“H-Hello everyone... Erm, I found this child, so I brought it back...”

At the door was Yunyun who was holding Chomusuke.

Part 5

“Please have some tea.”

“T-Thank you... Erm, Aqua-san. This...”

“It might be cheap, but the tea tastes nice right? I bought this with the allowance Kazuma gave me, I have been drinking this recently.”

“Ah... Yes, erm, this is tasty...”

Yunyun held the tea Aqua made for her and nodded with a baffled expression.

I took a glance and found the water to be clear...

No, this was just hot water.

Although Aqua brewed tea as a show of hospitality, but she turned the tea into water by accident.

Yunyun was probably concerned about the feelings of Aqua who was looking satisfied, and finished the water in the cup to destroy the evidence. She then picked up the motionless Chomusuke with both hands and gave it to me with a troubled look.

“Erm, when I was taking a stroll in the park nearby, I found Chomusuke was caught and bullied by kids, so I took it into custody...”

The mysterious furball that had a pair of small wings was the perfect toy for mischievous kids.

Seeing the still Chomusuke, I whispered to Megumin beside me:

“Hey, your evil god was chased by a chick, and now it is bullied by kids?”

“Y-Yunyun, you came at the right time! It’s not a big matter, but the situation is now a little bad!”

Megumin passed the newspaper to Yunyun as if she wanted to muddle through my comment.

“B-Bad?”

Yunyun who showed a cautious face to the term bad and took the papers reluctantly.

“Let me see... The daily serialization comic of Jack Frost’s journey. Penpal recruitment column? Hey Megumin, can you give me this newspaper if you don’t need it anymore? Just giving me the penpal recruitment would be enough.”

“Just what are you looking at! Here! Look at this article!”

Megumin snatched the papers, and flipped to the report in question for her.

Yunyun who was skeptical had a sudden dramatic reaction.

“Hmmm—!?! W-Wait!? Megumin, this is...”

“Y-You are reacting too much this time, Yunyun! The article is not that bad!”

“No, I am not overreacting at all! The evil god Wolbach is the one that was sealed in our village——”

“Shh! You are too loud!”



Hey.

“I think I heard something incredible just now.”

“You misheard, Kazuma. This girl will say weird things sometimes, that’s why she was ostracized in the Home of the Crimson Magic.”

Megumin averted her face strongly when she heard what I said. Yunyun became agitated because of her words.

“W-Wait, you are the one who is weird, Megumin! Nevermind that, listen to me Kazuma-san! This evil god Wolbach was sealed in our village in the past. The seal was undone one day, and Megumin made that evil god into her familiar wilfully behind everyone else’s back...”

“S-Stop! Don’t spread the ills of the Crimson Magic, we need to subjugate the fake proclaiming to be the evil god and making a ruckus in the capital, then pretend nothing happened!”

I looked at Megumin who was trying to cover Yunyun’s mouth frantically, and said to Darkness who was pressing her temple.

“Hey Darkness. Use your connections to borrow that magic item which will ring when it detects a lie from the police station.”

“I-I will be right back. Ah, I hope we won’t unearth more incredulous facts...”

“I, I didn’t do anything wrong! Lawyer! I demand a lawyer!”

Megumin who was subdued by Yunyun and Aqua yelled as Darkness walked out with an expression on the verge of tears.

—— A few hours later.

After getting the lie detecting magic item, we surrounded Megumin whose hands were tied as she knelt on the rug.

“Alright. Please answer honestly... So, what is the evil god Wolbach mentioned in the news?”

“Actually, Yunyun and I have some run ins with this evil god. That’s why we were concerned, and researched on the evil god in the village... Wolbach seemed to be the evil god that is the patron of Sloth and Violence.”

Hearing this unbelievable words, I looked at the magic item.

But the magic item didn’t ring, because Yunyun who was also a Crimson Magic seemed to know about this and kept quiet.

“Why is something that incredible sealed in the Home of the Crimson Magic?”

“A long time ago, our ancestors had fought the evil god in an intense battle over several days, and succeeded in sealing it. After that, they brought the evil god to the Home of the Crimson Magic to guard over it.”

—— Ring.

The magic item rang immediately.

“... Someone said ‘the place where the evil god is sealed sounds cool’, so they wilfully kidnapped the evil god that was sealed by people in the past, resealed it in a corner of the village, and made it a scenic point.”

The magic item didn’t react to her explanation.

“Hey.”

In response to my words, not just Megumin, even Yunyun averted her eyes.

Darkness who had been holding her head all this while said:

“That doesn’t matter, we can’t do anything about the past. Now we know how the evil god was sealed in the Home of the Crimson Magic. And so, why did that seal break? Who undid the seal?”

“It’s probably the evil god who manipulate its minions to undo the seal, so it could regain its original power and destroy humanity...”

—— Ring.

“.....” x4

We gazed at her wordlessly, and Megumin lowered her head as if she had given up.

“... My sister undid it playfully.”

“Wait!? Hey Megumin, this is the first time I heard this!”

Yunyun screamed when she heard Megumin’s confession, but...

—— Ring.

“Huh!?”

Megumin was surprised that the lie detector rang for some reasons.

But she understood it shortly after ——

“That’s right! The seal of the evil god was undid twice. I undid it by accident the first time, and things work out well because of the help of an Onee-san who happened to pass by. My sister broke the seal the second time.”

After she said that and confirmed that the magic item didn’t ring, Megumin nodded satisfactory.

“What is this ahhhhhh!”

“W-What are you doing!? S... Stop! I will answer honestly, so calm down!”

“You Crimson Magics are always making a mess.”

I sighed as I watch the two clansmen wrestling on the floor. At this moment, Aqua picked up the magic item excitedly for some reason.

“Megumin Megumin, do you like the Axis Cult? Or do you hate it? Cecilia from my church said that you have some fate with the Axis Cult, and might join if I pushed you more forcefully.”

“I won’t join no matter how much you pressure me! Cecilia-san is always giving me trouble, and I don’t want anything to do with the Axis Cult that is a mob of problematic people. If you ask me, of course I hate...”

—— Ring.

Aqua’s expression blossomed the instant she saw the magic item rang, while Megumin averted her gaze shyly.

“... The cultist member did take care of me in the past, so I don’t really hate...”

After seeing Aqua use the lie detector in an awesome way, I felt moved.

I always thought she was an idiot, but she might actually be a genius.

“Hey Megumin, what do you think about us? Answer in terms of like or hate.”

“Yeah, I want to ask too. You even made amulet for everyone the other time, so how do you feel about us?”

“... W-What, there’s no need to answer this sort of questions... Hey, don’t look at me with a devious smile like that!”

Seeing us toy with Megumin with the magic item, Yunyun stroked Chomusuke’s back and said as if she just remembered something...

“E-Erm... This child should be the evil god that is sealed, but the news stated the name Wolbach, so what is going on...?”

I turned to look at the magic item, and it didn’t ring as if this was expected.

“Wait, I just heard something incredible. This thing is that evil god? Chomusuke is the evil god!?”

“I already told you. This child is an evil god, and also my familiar. I was wondering what the Boss of the Demon King Army pretending to be this child was thinking.”

After Yunyun, Megumin also said something to the same effect, but the magic item still remain dormant.

“Hey, this cute thing here is actually the evil god? Is the magic item broken?”

As a cat lover, I hope Chomusuke that I had been brushing and playing with is not such a horrific existence.

Aqua remembered something and said abruptly:

“Hey Kazuma. I have always thought that you are a wonderful person with a gentle heart. I have always felt deep gratitude for you.”

“Hey, what are you saying all of a sudden? Are you trying to get on my good side because my period of popularity is here? Even if you compliment me so exaggeratedly, I won’t give you allowance...”

—— Ring.

Aqua nodded satisfyingly as she looked at the ringing magic item.

“No problem, the magic item is working just fine.”

“Alright, let’s bring it outside. You have been looking down on me recently. Looks like I have to teach you a lesson.”

As I stood up, ready to grab Aqua.

Megumin who had been kneeling on the rug suddenly lowered her head and said:

“... Kazuma, sorry but I need your help. Can you go with me? Actually, Chomusuke had been a kidnap target plenty of times. I think the person in the news won’t let this go easily. As its owner, I want to dispose of the self proclaimed evil god calling itself Wolbach.”

The hot tempered Megumin who don’t like to ask for favours lowered her head as she pleaded.

The opponent was a Boss of the Demon King Army who was powerful enough to change the tide of the battle alone.

To be frank, I don’t want to go. Even so...

“... Can’t you go?”

When I saw Megumin looking up at me timidly with red eyes that had a flicker of uneasiness.

I felt that I was too much of a pushover.

This was the only reply I could make.

“I can’t really do anything about you!”

Part 6

The day after I accepted Megumin's request.

I needed some time to make preparations for the long expedition and told everyone we will set off tomorrow. Then I sat on the couch cross legged, using my crafting skills to make something.

Darkness also sat on the couch and watch me intriguingly. Aqua who sat on my other side said:

"Hey Kazuma, what is that?"

"Something I bought from Wiz's shop, a potion that will explode on impact."

"Ehhh!?" x2

Darkness got up in a panic after hearing what I said, and took a step back together with Aqua.

My materials were laid scattered on the table.

There were paper, dropper and a special type of soil that could absorb a lot of liquid and ignite easily. It seemed to be formed from the decomposing matter of a certain plant.

I had been using the dropper to transfer the potion that would explode on impact onto the soil on top of the paper.

Aqua back away slowly as she asked uneasily:

"H-Hey... Why are you making something so scary? What do you plan to do with that?"

I gently position the bottle in my hand away from me.

And placed it gently onto the floor.

“I always thought that this is something like a magical potion. But it will explode when it touches fire too. A single drop will go boom when it comes into contact with fire. So I was thinking if this is similar to nitrates.”

We will be going to a dangerous battlefield where the Boss of the Demon King Army was.

The frontlines where the adventurers with cheats couldn't get any advantages.

When Darkness was forced to marry the landlord Alderp, I thought about reproducing a certain thing in this world.

But I couldn't find anything to replace nitrates back then, so I could made a replica that only look similar in appearance.

And the replica was thrown away by Megumin after I finished it.

I said to Aqua and Darkness who were looking at me with a confused look.

“I can make something with this. What kind of enemy will we face at our destination tomorrow? If I can make this, it will become our trump card in the future.”

After she heard me, Aqua looked at the materials on the table and seemed to have figured out what I was making.

That's right, it's that famous...

“I see... It is summer now. The Japanese blood in Kazuma's body is urging you to make fireworks.”

“It's dynamite.”

Darkness asked confusedly.

“Fireworks? Dynamite? I never heard of them. What are they used for?”

I handed the three sticks I completed to Darkness who was tilting her head in confusion.

The one I almost completed was thrown away by Megumin, but I still tried making a few when I was bored. Right now, I am rushing to finish it for the expedition tomorrow.

Aqua picked up the imitation dynamite I just completed and inspected it curiously.

She then covered it with both hands.

“Kazuma, look.”

.....?

Aqua placed the imitation dynamite on the table.

It was obviously two sizes smaller...

“It shrank.”

“Moron!!”

I snatched the dynamite shrank by Aqua. This wasn't like the magic of some comedian on variety shows, it really turned smaller physically.

“You...! What did you do to this thing that I spent so much time making!? What can I do with this, can you turn it back!? And can this still be used!?”

“It definitely can't be turned back.”

Aqua who performed this trick out of nowhere showed no signs of remorse when she said that.

“Do you understand? I am making this for the expedition tomorrow. You are quite good with your hands, make one to compensate for the one you spoiled.”

“If I make it, one out of three of the sticks will turn small okay?”

“Why!? Are you hiding a shrinking gun on you!?”

I couldn't bear throwing the miniaturized dynamite either, so I tried stuffing it into my pocket. It was small and convenient, which irked me even more.

I have no complaints if it could still be used like this.

Darkness who was observing the finished product she picked up ignored our arguments and asked curiously:

“So, what is this thing exactly?”

“I will show it to you after lunch. You will definitely be surprised. Especially Megumin.”

I said confidently.

“Time for lunch. Tidy up the table and wash your hands... What’s the matter? Why is everyone staring at me like that?”

Megumin who was cooking today brought out lunch on a tray, and had a baffled expression.

—— Far away from the city, on a hill with lots of boulders.

This seemed to be the spot recommended by Megumin for her explosion strolls.

“What a rare sight, everyone came along for my stroll. If I knew, I would have made lunch boxes instead so we could picnic outside.”

Megumin was probably elated that everyone was accompanying her for her daily explosion spell, she waved her staff along happily.

Megumin chanted her spell...

“Explosion!”

With a boom, the surroundings were hit by shockwaves.

The strongest spell that could disintegrate everything shattered the target boulder easily.

Darkness stood nonchalantly in the hail of debris to protect us while we kept our head down.

I supported Megumin who was about to fall from mana exhaustion, then injected just enough mana through Drain Touch so she could walk by herself.

“Ho, that’s a high score today.”

“Right? I think the effect is really nice. Phew, I’m satisfied. Let’s go back...? Kazuma, what is that?”

Megumin was intrigued when I took out two imitation dynamite.

I wrapped several layers of paper around the soil soaked with the exploding potion to stabilize it, with a fuse soaked in the same potion placed into its very center. That’s how simple this dynamite was.

It was enough for prototype number one.

“After obtaining the weapon known as wealth, I wondered if I can kill my opponent with money and tried making prototype one. Watch carefully.”

I stick that behind a boulder in the vicinity, shifting the fuse towards me so I could see it easily.

“... Wait, I think that thing Kazuma made looks familiar...”

Megumin said something, but I didn’t answer and just pulled some distance away.

“Tinder!”

I ignited the fuse from far away.

Sparks flew out from the fuse...

An idea struck me, and I reached my hand out towards the boulder and shouted:

“Explosion!”

“Huh!?”

Megumin yelped.

With a boom that covered her shout, the make shift dynamite exploded, and a crack appeared on the boulder.

The power still couldn't match those used for demolition works huh.

But it was more than adequate as a weapon.

"Ah... Ahhh..."

Megumin was trembling beside me, while Darkness clenched her fist with a flushed face.

"A-Amazing Kazuma! When did you learn explosion!?"

"Hmmp... the hardworking me had been leveling up in secret while you all were sleeping."

I said casually to the excited Darkness.

"Ahhh.... Ahhhhhh..."



Megumin made a soft sound and started shaking a lot.

At this moment, Aqua tugged at my sleeve and said:

“Kazuma Kazuma, give me one too. I want to try using explosion.”

“This is a prototype, I will give you one after making a dynamite with longer fuse. I am worried, and ignited it from afar.”

“Ahhhhh... Ahhhhhhhhhhh...”

“Got it. Remember to let me play with it after you finish.”

“That’s fine, but the potions are expensive and the supplies are limited. So you can’t just play with it.”

“I-If I use that, even a crusader like me can use explosion? Or did you learned magic for real? H-Hey, if you make a new one, I want to try too...!”

I was bothered by Megumin who had been deathly quiet unlike the hyped up Aqua and Darkness.

I thought she would have the biggest reaction, but she had just been making quiet noises since just now and shivering.

I stood before Megumin and make a pose with one hand stretched out.

“I am Kazuma! Number one adventurer in Axel, the one who control explo——”

“Ahhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhh!!”

Before I finished, Megumin grabbed my collar and shouted:

“That thing! That thing is not explosion magic! The power is only at the level of blast magic! That thing! That... that...!”

“Hey, I get it, calm down, wait! That is just a tool, I’m kidding, kidding!”

I explained frantically, but Megumin who was grabbing my collar while screaming snatched the last stick of dynamite from my hand.

“Ah, hey! It takes a lot of money and time to make one, give it back!”

“No! With me around, there is no need for this thing to exist! This, this thing!”

Megumin yelled as she threw away the thing I spent a lot of effort to make.

Ahh~....

“I will throw it away if I see that again! That is a deviant thing! I won’t acknowledge that fake!”

“I know I know, I know alright... Really, I only made this to accommodate your willfulness.”

“It might be useful, but no!”

I will make it in my room secretly behind Megumin’s back then.

... I reached for the dynamite Megumin threw far away.

Using the chance while Megumin was still fuming, I chanted a spell softly.

“... Tinder!”

I covertly chanted the spell and ignited the fuse.

Timing myself...

“Explosion!!”

“!?”

It was a pity to throw away the thing that took so much effort to make, so I simulated the explosion spell for the second time today.

Megumin didn’t speak with me until dinner.

Part 7

—— The next day.

I wore my new equipment, and slotted the katana with a shameful name onto my belt.

Putting the cape that was the trademark for adventurers, I shouldered a backpack that had enough food to last for a few days.

“Weapons check, food check, equipment check! All the items are ready!”

Although we fought many Bosses and bounty monsters, the circumstance this time was different than before.

This time, we were the one picking the fight.

The trump card I made yesterday might have been refuted, but I found plenty of magic items from Wiz’s shop that might be of use, preparing ourselves well and thought up several tactics.

“Kazuma, you were so unwilling just a while ago, yet you are so eager about this now. What’s the occasion?”

Aqua said. I wondered what Aqua stuffed inside her backpack to make it so full.

By the way, Emperor Zell was still a newborn and needed to be cared for, and she forcefully pushed it to Wiz early in the morning.

“Because I thought about the battle this time, and found that our chances are quite good.”

We will be heading to the fortress near the capital at the very frontlines.

Right now, the strongest forces of this nation had been gathered at that fortress.

On top of the Kingdom’s Knight Corp, there were many adventurers with cheat like powers there, so they won’t lose if the Boss of the Demon King Army didn’t join the fray.

With a bunch of cheaters defending the fortress, we just need to repel the Boss of the Demon King Army with Megumin's explosion.

—— I think this was a simple and effective plan.

Compared to the fights before this, we could defeat the enemy in a safer manner, and the rewards would be much greater too.

Furthermore...

"Furthermore, Yunyun who could use teleport would be coming along."

I said as I looked towards Yunyun who was inspecting her luggage beside Megumin.

Yunyun who had risen her level through hard work and learned teleport said she wanted to go with us.

The places Yunyun registered were the capital and Axel town.

Being able to return to this place at the sign of danger was a great advantage.

"I-I will work hard! I will carry the luggages, make the food, keep watch at night and storm the front, I will do anything!"

"Oh, alright then, I will be counting on you. We will feel more at ease if we encounter powerful monsters during the journey if Yunyun is with us."

Yunyun who was always by herself seemed really happy about going on a trip with everyone.

She had been fidgety since just now.

"Is everyone ready? Did you forget anything? I have handkerchiefs and toilet paper, just tell me if you need any!"

"Please calm down, we are not kids going on a field trip."

I looked at the rare sight of Megumin calming Yunyun down, looked at everyone to confirm they were all ready, then nodded.

“We will be in your care, Yunyun. We will teleport to the capital first, then walk to the fortress from there. It seemed that veteran adventurers can reach it in about two days. There are accommodations available along the way, so we will head there first.”

“Okay, I have prepared all manners of board and card games for our stay outside, so don’t worry!”

So that was the reason for Yunyun’s huge luggage.

She seemed to be looking forward to staying outside with everyone.

Maybe this was the first time she took a trip together with everyone.

As I was sadly thinking that she could have just invited us out to play, Yunyun finished chanting her spell.

“Teleport!”

CHAPTER 3

ONE NIGHT WITH THIS RED-HAIRED BEAUTY!

Part 1

When I came to, we were already in front of the capital.

The soldiers guarding the main gate were probably already immune to the phenomenon of 'teleport', and were not in the slightest bit surprised at our sudden appearance. They dutifully checked the surroundings for monsters that may have broken through the frontlines.

Since I've come all the way here, I considered going to see my cute sister Iris, but they were probably still searching for the mysterious and handsome thief.

In other words, they wouldn't be able to resist my special aura, and would capture and interrogate me using the lie-detecting magic tool.

I slowly dropped my knapsack, and said:

"Alright, since we are already prepared upon arrival, my original plan was for us to go straight for the frontlines. However, now that I think about it, we should collect some info on the situation from that person over there. I have a plan-"

Leaving my confused companions behind, I walked towards the guard of the main gate.

"Everyone here is working hard. Ah~, your passion for your work is truly commendable."

"Thanks, you guys are travelling adventurers right? You've probably heard this already, but the capital is currently in a state of high alert due to the attacks of the demon king army. Anyway, don't just stand there, if you're entering the capital then hurry up and come in."

The soldiers maintained their vigilance as they spoke to me who was wearing a friendly expression..

“No, we are not here to visit the capital. Rather, we rushed here after hearing that the capital was in a state of crisis. We want to go support the fortress closest to the frontlines.

“Oh, you came here to help? ...Though I am truly moved, will you be fine on the frontlines with your gear? The enemies gathered near the fortress are all elite troops of the demon king army you know?”

Though in truth, I was fully fitted in expensive gear, it wouldn't be wrong to say that light armor is unsuitable for the situation.

At first glance, I did appear to be rather weak.

“Oi oi, I'll feel troubled if evaluate me so lightly. I might not look the part, but I have the accomplishment of defeating a demon king army general... My name is Satou Kazuma, you've at least heard of this name before right?”

“Huh!? What are you saying, a man like you...”

Just as the soldier was doubting the contents of my boasting:

“Hey wait a second! I don't recognize this man, but I've seen the people behind him before!”

Another soldier spotted the rest of my group, who were sitting a distance away.

“That's right! I've heard of that great magician who swept away the demon king army with explosion magic!”

“Wait, that is Dustiness-sama! Dustiness-sama who is able to take the blows of a battalion of monsters is here!”

“I've seen that blue-haired priest before! When the demon king army attacked a while ago, she cast powerful support magic, and healed all the wounded!”

The soldiers pointed at the people standing behind me, and excitedly discussed amongst themselves.

It seems that they remembered the time when we visited the capital a while ago, and participated in repelling the demon king army.

“It seems that you know your stuff. Yes, we are...”

“Ah, I remember you! You’re the guy that was hacked to death by kobolds!”

...Eh.

“Yeah, now that you say it, I remember now. You’re the guy that embarrassingly charged in front, and got surrounded and mobbed Kobolds!”

“You’re way too weak, don’t even think about coming to a place like this. There’s a faraway town called Axel that’s known as the gathering place for newbie adventurers. Why don’t you go there and level-up a bit first?”

“The monsters around here are all really strong. By the way, are you just their servant or something? Even if you’re just a porter, you need to have decent strength.”

Ah, what should I say?

...No, now was not the time to pointlessly argue with these guards.

“As you can see, we’re a strong adventurer party. Besides me, the leader, the party is composed of an archpriest, a crusader, and two archwizards. It is a rather luxurious group isn’t it?”

“Ah that’s pretty amazing! ...Hey, If I may ask, what job do you, the self-proclaimed leader have?”

“...Hmpf, right now we’re going to go help the nearest fortress, but we’re not sure how to get there. That said, if there are any adventurers or soldier going to the fortress, please allow us to accompany them. Of course, since they’re leading the way for us, we wouldn’t charge any protection fees, so you can rest assured.”

I ignored the soldier’s inquiry, and returned to the original objective of this conversation.

Even though it was only a two-day trek to the fortress, there were a lot of strong monsters along the way. So I thought it would be better to have someone guide us, while simultaneously improve our combat capabilities.

To be honest, the only person that was useful in this situation was Yunyun, so in a roundabout way, I was actually looking for some make-shift bodyguards.

But my brilliant plan-

“It’s extremely regrettable, but I would not recommend going there. The enemy general’s siege on the fortress has been relentless. Currently, the wounded adventurers are falling back every day, and his majesty the king and the crown prince – whom were fighting in the frontlines – have been forced to retreat for the sake of their safety. In this kind of situation, no one would willingly go to the fortress.”

“What-?”

–was shattered by the soldiers who described the unexpected circumstances.

The situation was far more dire that I had thought.

The soldiers continued:

“Even though no one can bring you there, as a compromise, I can give you a map that shows you the location of the fortress, as well as the distribution of monsters in the area. I would usually stop other adventurers from going, but with a party like yours, you shouldn’t have any problems getting there. Good luck! Your name is Satou Kazuma right!? I will tell the adventurers and the townspeople that ‘A brave adventurer party led by Satou Kazuma has left for the frontlines!’”

“...Huh.”

No, actually, I was reconsidering whether or not we should ask for help.

“I’ll leave it to you to help my comrades that have been struggling on the frontlines!”

“Yeah, we saw how you repelled the demon king army last time, you guys can do it!”

“Alright, I’ll go to town to spread the news! Everyone will be overjoyed!”

While I was at a loss for words, the soldiers continued to converse amongst one another.

They handed me the map.

“““Well then, we’ll leave this to you!”””

“Ah, ok.”

–With the map in hand, I solemnly returned to my idle companions.

“...Look, after talking to them, I managed to get a map of the fortress and the information about monsters.”

“Well that’s a surprise, I didn’t think Kazuma was this enthusiastic. Well then, let’s go!

...Eh

The options to turn back were quickly sealed.

Part 2

–If there weren't any problems along the way, it would take about two days to travel to the fortress.

Anyhow, there were checkpoints along the way where we could rest.

Since a dangerous location like the frontlines wouldn't have any caravans, we decided to travel to the first checkpoint.

“Oh, if anyone is hungry please tell me, I brought a lot of snacks! Also, since I know elementary-level magic, I can create clean water, so if you're thirsty you can tell me as well. Ah, Megumin stop! Don't go there, that path looks like it's about to collapse.”

“Why are you so naggy? Are you a child going camping for the first time!? We have to walk a long distance today, if you keep this up you'll be really tired later.”

It seemed that it was Yunyun's first time travelling with such a large group. She walked restlessly in front of the group, and her eyes were dyed in an excited and bright crimson.

Although she had accompanied us to the Village of Crimson Magic, but overnight trips were a different story altogether.

However, someone else besides Yunyun was equally excited.

“What are these light and fluffy things? I've never seen it in Axel.”

“...Mm. Oi Aqua, they're a fairy-type creature called Kesaran Pasaran. They're completely harmless, so just ignore them...”

<TL Note: Japanese Mythical creature. >

Despite my advice, Aqua continued to chase the curious flying furballs.

“Kesaran Pasarans are a subtype of snow-fairies, so if you bully it around, their guardian will show up alright?”

Ignoring Aqua, who excitedly chased the white furballs around, I asked Megumin an important question:

“Hey Megumin, are you sure it was a good idea to bring it along?”

I pointed at Chomusuke, who walked in front of the group alongside the elated Yunyun.

Although I felt that it was pointless to bring this black furball to the frontlines, Megumin insisted that there would be a time where it would be of some use to us.

“You’ll understand when we get there. In other words, this thing will help us subjugate the demon king army general.”

Megumin answered the question of ‘why?’ before I could even ask.

Well, it was still hard to believe that the furball being fed by Yunyun was in fact an evil god.

“Ah, oi Aqua, it’s dangerous to hold onto it any longer. Just let it go already.”

“Just let me rub it a little while longer. I have been away from Emperor Zell for a long time, and this thing reminds me of him.”

“Didn’t you part with Emperor Zell this morning?”

As Megumin and I listened to the peaceful chatter from behind, I began to doubt whether or not this was really the dangerous frontlines.

As I began to doubt myself —

I was alerted by my ‘enemy detection’ skill.

However, since I was doused by the peace and tranquility of the situation, my reaction was one step slower.

As I was about warn everyone...

“Stop right there adventurers! This path is under our control! Leave your money and luggage here!”

–A group of battle-ready bandits appeared before us.

Seeing this group of unkempt and disorderly men, I became excited like never before.

Though such events were outside my control, since coming to this world, it was my first time experiencing such a ‘fantasy world’-like event.

Of course, it was the same for Aqua.

“Kazuma, it’s bandits! It’s my first time seeing actual bandits! In this world filled to the brim with monsters, there are actually people who take up such a useless way of life!”

Aqua excitedly gazed at the group of men.

At first I thought that the security of an alternate-world would be bad, and that there were probably bandits along the roads.

After all, this is a common thing in the fantasy worlds that I am familiar with.

However, the reality was not that simple. In a world filled with monsters, it was hard to understand why anyone would decide to live outside the walls of a town or city, so to think that there were people that would actually pursue a life of banditry...

If one was capable of surviving in a place filled with monsters, instead of waiting for prey that might not even show up, it would be better to work as an adventurer, and live a more stable life.

Adventuring might not be that stable a line of work, but compared to fugitives that couldn’t enter towns and live in constant fear of monsters and knights, being an adventurer was far better.

Aqua and I were not the only ones moved by the appearance of the legendary mob called ‘bandit’.

“Kazuma Kazuma! The mob that is rarer than onion duck – bandits has appeared!”

“Bandits have really appeared! Even though I travel a lot on my own, but since the day I was born, this is the first time I’ve encountered actual, living bandits! When I return to the Village of Crimson Magic, I will brag to everyone about this!”

The men gritted their teeth in anger as they listened to the excited cries of the two Crimson Magic clansmen.

It was then, that I noticed the heavy atmosphere that surrounded Darkness.

No.

Her body seemed to trembling in excitement.

The bandits' frustration grew as they witnessed our unfazed reaction toward their appearance.

“Oi, are you guys looking down on us!? Hurry up and hand over your money!”

The bearded man – who seemed to be the bandit leader – gazed at us with bloodshot eyes.

What a textbook performance!

These guys are definitely the real deal!

With each passing moment, we were becoming more moved by their appearance.

On the other hand, Darkness quickly moved in front of the group.

“Just looking at you people, I can clearly tell that you people haven’t had a bath in forever and reek of disgusting body odor! Though I’m not sure if it’s due to the abstinent lifestyle in the mountains, but your gazes are also filled with lust! You imbecile bandits who would ravish weak girls with all your might, my name is Dustiness Ford Lalatina! As a female knight, I will not let you do as you please!”

Darkness valiantly introduced herself, and moved to the front of the party as if to shield us. However, her face – which was a shade of beet red – suggested otherwise.

“Dustiness...?”

“Oi, oi, did she just say Dustiness?”

“Dustiness as in the noble house Dustiness? Now that I think about it, she has blonde hair and blue-eyes... Isn’t that evidence of her noble heritage!?”

Without heed for the bandit's conversation —

“You said to leave our luggage and money, but you bastards won't be satisfied by just that won't you? I can tell just by seeing your gazes... Once we remove our battle equipment you'll say things like 'Hey, aren't these girls quite nice? We'll be able to fetch a high price for them...!'.”

The men before us scrambled to get away from the rambling pervert, who once upon a time, said that she would try to act more ladylike.

“Of course it won't end there! You'll say things like 'Boss, before we sell the goods why don't we try them out?' with a dirty smile! Then the person over there that looks like your boss will say 'Oh, of course. Is there a reason not to try out our high quality products...?' ...Oi, what is it? Why are you suddenly running? What is your intention!?”

Darkness stared blankly at the bandits, who turned tail and ran away without a second of doubt.

“If there are nobles here, then that means there are knight squadrons nearby! Hurry up and run!”

“Those red eyes, they are Crimson Magic clansmen!”

“Oi, Oi wait! There are a bunch of young girls here, are you sure you're fine with this!? Also, there are no knights here! Wait, wait! What about your pride as bandits...!”

To stop her from chasing the bandits while saying idiotic things, I grabbed Darkness by the collar of her armor.

Part 3

“Because you won’t let those people go, we’re in such a mess.”

“Ah...b-, but as a knight, I can’t turn a blind eye to those that harm the masses...”

The sun had completely set.

After setting up camp, we sat around a campfire.

Because a certain moron suggested we search the area to finish off the bandits, we didn’t reach the checkpoint in time.

“I also wanted to fight those bandits. If we defeat such a rare mob, lots of money will drop for sure.”

“Oi, don’t call bandits a mob.”

Anyhow, those people were outlaws, but squandering our time was a criminal act as well.

“By the way, who’ll keep watch for tonight? The monsters around here are really dangerous.”

As Aqua said that, she added more sticks to the campfire, and curiously inspected the contents of the pot that hung above it.

The pot continued to release a pleasant aroma.

“Ah...P-Please leave it to me. I have confidence in my stamina. Everyone else can take a rest.”

“Darkness-san, this camping atmosphere has made me really excited! There’ll be no problems! Please leave it to me!”

Yunyun spoke to the apologetic Darkness without reserve.

From what I see, it seemed that she was really happy.

Megumin looked up towards Yunyun, and said.

“...Don’t stay up late alright? After all, you were probably really excited about our journey, and didn’t sleep last night right?”

“W-Why do you know that!?”

She was like a child going on a field trip.

“Just let me do it alright? I have the ‘Enemy Detection’ and ‘Night Vision’ skills, and I’m a night owl anyway. Put out the fire after dinner so that we won’t be noticed by monsters.”

Hearing what I had to say, Darkness apologetically lowered her head.

“Sorry Kazuma... because of my stupid actions...”

“Of course, if you really feel bad about it, don’t chase after some random old men again.”

“No problem. I lost my composure because bandits – who are the enemy of all female knights – appeared. I have prepared myself. In the future, I will only allow myself to be led around by a specific person.”

“Oi, I don’t get what you mean, but I feel like I’d be better off not knowing.”

Towards Darkness who said such nonsense with a serious expression, I replied with an equally serious expression.

A while after everyone else had eaten their late dinner and gone to sleep—

I put out the fire, and stood guard over the camp alone.

I maximized the output of the ‘Night Vision’ ability, and tried various ways to see everyone’s sleeping faces.

Then, from somewhere in the faraway darkness, I detected the presence of some monsters.

The campfire had already been put out, and the skies were cloudy without a trace of starlight. The surroundings were almost completely dark, so even if it was a nocturnal monster, our position shouldn't be discovered easily.

As a precaution, I activated the 'Hide' skill on everyone.

Even though it looked like I was assaulting them in their sleep, this was simply a security measure. It was not something I needed to feel guilty about.

Anyhow, I don't think we will be discovered.

...I thought, but it seemed like the enemy was moving directly towards our location.

The time was not even past midnight.

When I realized that, I figured out the identity of the monster–

It was an undead that was drawn to Aqua's presence.

Thinking back to my experiences with Aqua in Keele's dungeon, I remembered that masses of undead that were drawn to Aqua's presence. It was to the extent that the 'Hide' skill had no effect.

It seems that there's no other way. Should I wake everyone up?

If I had to wake everyone up, then we need to light a fire.

That might attract a bunch of monsters. More importantly, the reaction of undead became stronger in the presence of light.

If it was a couple of zombies or skeletons, then I could deal with this alone.

With my 'Farsight' ability, I can accurately fire several arrows if they get closer.

I considered the situation calmly, and silently waited for them to approach.

The heavy sounds that came from the direction made me feel uneasy.

–Thump.

There was the sound of something wet.

–Thump.

At the very least, it was a sound that a mere zombie shouldn't be able to make.

I tried focusing on it, but I could not identify the enemy.

I had a bad feeling about this, and quickly turned to wake everyone up.

“Oi, there's something coming. It seems to be an undead...Oi, get up. Aqua, Aqua!!!”

The other three woke up immediately, however, the most important person did not even bat an eye.

–Thump.

I drew my katana and pointed it in the direction of the approaching enemy.

“Hey, hurry up and wake this idiot up! Also, for some reason I can't make out the silhouette of the enemy with my 'Night Vision'. Just light up the surroundings!”

Darkness picked up her greatsword and scabbard as Megumin tried to shake Aqua awake.

“Aqua, Aqua! Get up, an undead is here!”

Despite Megumin's efforts, Aqua continued to lay motionless.

“I'm sleepy...Can you just tell them to let me go for today...”

“Oi you useless livestock, get out of bed already! They're here for you, so get up and do something! 'Tinder'!!”

Infusing more mana than usual, I loudly chanted and directed the spell to the space in front of me.

The surroundings – which lacked a fuel for fire – was brightened by the magical luminescence.

Even though I used a large amount of magic power, the light still could not be sustained for long.

Once I saw the enemy, I understood why my 'Night Vision' could not see this enemy clearly.

The reason I could not identify the enemy, was because it was too large.

"Ah-...Wawawawa....Wh-...What what what is this...!"

Megumin immediately lost her composure.

"How could it... Why, in a place like this...!?"

Yunyun, who had faced off against numerous powerful enemies, froze at the sight of the monster.

Even Darkness, who happily rushed into the most dangerous situations, was at a loss of words.

"...H-Hurry up and w-...wake Aqua up..."

Gazing at the monster before us, I murmured stiffly.

"——!!"

A difficult to describe noise reverberated in the night.

It's vocal cords had probably rotted, so it could only utter such a sound.

It opened its maw wide, and whenever it tried to roar, something sprayed out.

The thing it spitted out that fell to the ground with a wet thud was a part of its rotten body.

"The walking corpse of a dragon, there is no better adversary for a crusader! The three of you, back away!"

Darkness took a stance with her sword to protect us.

“——!!”

As if reacting to Darkness’ meager hostility, it once again released a disastrous sound, as it pulled it’s gigantic body in our direction...

“Aqua—! Aqua-samaaaaaaa-! It’s a dragon! A bone dragon has appeared! Hurry up! I beg you, please do something about it——!”

It’s gigantic body seemed like it could topple houses just by leaning on it.

The bone dragon extended it wings, and it’s massive body seemed to become even more daunting.

With a sense of dreadful hopelessness, I looked towards Aqua.

Aqua seemed to unfazed, and continued to roll in her sheets.

“Hm...It’s just a bone dragon...let Emperor Zell deal with it...”

“Stop dreaming and get up, or you’ll become bone dragon food!”

The bone dragon pounced at Darkness!

Part 4

“‘Turn Undead’ –!”

After being hit by Aqua’s holy magic, the bone dragon released a dreadful cry, and was purified.

If Aqua had any redeeming qualities, it was that she was reliable against the undead.

I was about to show my gratitude towards Aqua...

...?

No wait a second, it was her fault that the bone dragon showed up in the first place!

I looked at Darkness, who lay on the floor as Megumin and Yunyun kneeled beside her.

“Darkness! Please Darkness! Your injuries are not deep, so open your eyes!”

“Megumin, don’t shake her! I-I-I-In times like these we have to stay calm!”

In the first place, if Aqua had woke up immediately, then Darkness – who protected us – would have not been struck unconscious.

“Hehe, how could a mere bone dragon be my worthy opponent. Kazuma, praise me however you wa – ahhhhhh–!?”

Without another word, I grabbed Aqua’s face and began to use ‘Drain Touch’.

“W-Wait, what are you doing!? Doing this when I can’t resist, are you looking for a fight!?”

Aqua cried as she flicked my hands away. She then proceeded to tackle me.

“It’s because I don’t want to give you time to resist! Just look at Darkness! It’s your fault that the bone dragon showed up! Just get up when we tell you to get up! Give me some of your energy to make up for mine when I stayed up all night to keep watch!”

“What!? W-Why should I!? Didn’t you just ambush me? I won’t let you drain energy from me ever again. Here, I’ll let you try, but not even a real lich could drain from me!”

This selfish idiot!

Ignoring Aqua who showed a strange defiance, I ran towards Darkness, and used ‘Tinder’ to check her condition.

When I was busy trying to wake up Aqua, Darkness had taken the attacks of the bone dragon on her own...

“‘Heal’-! ...Well, as expected of Darkness. Even though a dragon’s signature breath attack can’t be used, their physical limits are removed after they become undead. So basically, a bone dragon’s physical attacks are more powerful than living dragons you know? Taking its attacks head on, I’m surprised she didn’t turn into paste.”

Aqua said such dangerous things as she healed darkness.

When I think about it, it was rare for Darkness to be knocked out so easily.

Were the monsters in the frontlines this vicious?

... Well, if there were bone dragons, doesn’t that mean that there were also live dragons here?

Hmm... Although the map mentioned bone dragons, I’m fairly confident that it never mentioned live dragons...

Megumin and Yunyun sat worriedly beside Darkness, whose armor had been deformed from the vicious blows of the bone dragon.

Then, I noticed the things looming in our surroundings.

“Damn, the monsters have noticed our presence because of the light and noises from the fight. My ‘Enemy Detection’ is showing a huge return signal. We don’t have a choice. Let’s move somewhere else. I’ll take Darkness’ and your luggage, so Aqua, carry Darkness.”

“What!? You’re asking me to carry Darkness!? With her armor she’s really heavy. Also, are we going to walk around in the dark?”

I deftly gathered their belongings, and said:

“Cast some strength enhancing magic on yourself. With your high stats besides luck and intelligence, you should be able to easily carry her if you cast it. Cast a buff on me too while you’re at it. Also, with my abilities it’s already hard to carry 3 people’s worth of luggage, so there’s no way I can carry Darkness. Megumin and Yunyun will hold my hands, and we’ll proceed using my ‘Night Vision’. Be careful not to trip.”

As I said that, I picked up the luggage.

Ugh...As expected, it’s a bit too much...

“By the way, even with armor, isn’t Darkness rather heavy? Also she was bitten by the bone dragon, so she smells really bad...”

“...That’s because Darkness’ body is full of muscles. Don’t tell her that though.”

Darkness’ armor made clattering sounds with each step that Aqua took.

Under the cloudy skies, without the slightest glint of starlight, we proceeded forward through this black landscape.

Aqua – whose ability to see in the dark was far superior to mine – happily said:

“Ah, this reminds me of the time when Kazuma and I went to that dungeon a while ago. If I remember correctly, Kazuma tried to touch my butt in the darkness.”

“Oi, if you’re going to make groundless accusations I’ll leave you here alone.”

Megumin giggled at our pointless banter.

“Even though we just encountered a bone dragon and barely escaped a group of monsters, I can’t help but feel reassured. While we can’t be called a powerful party, I feel that as long as we stay together, we can overcome anything.”

Megumin tightened her grip on my hand.

...Well, maybe I expected too much of her thoughtless, but honest behavior.

“How great... When will I be able to encounter companions like Kazuma-san’s group?”

Yunyun – who held my other hand – said with a hint of envy.

When Yunyun said that, Megumin clenched my right hand tightly for some reason.

“That’s impossible. After all, Yunyun needs to be able to make friends first.”

“!?”

“Y-You, don’t diss people at a time like this!”

Part 5

After a long trek, Darkness finally woke up.

A while after, we saw the light of the checkpoint residence, and we collectively breathed a sigh of relief.

I heard there was a place to stay, but I was not expecting a building as large as a noble's mansion that was surrounded by solid walls.

As we moved closer, we saw a billboard indicating the specialties here.

"So the living accommodation here is a hot-spring inn... when I think of hot-springs, I can't help but remember the time where we went to Alcanretia."

Said Megumin nostalgically.

Darkness and Megumin giggled, as if resisting the urge to outright laugh.

"Yes. Back then, Kazuma tried to eavesdrop on us when we entered the bath."

"K-, Kazuma-san, did you really do that...?"

Yunyun's jade eyes stared at me as if she was looking at trash.

"Hey Kazuma, the bath here is probably a mixed-bath, so can you wait till we're done to go in? I feel like this is a crisis for my chastity."

"That's merely wishful thinking, after all, even I have the right to choose."

Aqua and I pushed our palms against one other, as if we were sumo-wrestling. Then, Megumin happily said.

"Let's go. There aren't many people who would come to a hot-springs inn in this kind of place, so we probably have the place all to ourselves."

"I'll go first! Actually, why don't we all wash together!?"

"I don't mind."

And of course, my reply was ignored.

“Wait, didn’t Aqua ruin the hot-spring in Alcaentia? Aqua, can you go last?”

“Hmm alright. Taking a bath last is pretty enjoyable y’know, after all, being able to take my time is one of the merits of a vacation.”

“T-T-Taking a bath...with everyone...”

Despite the time, the girls rowdily entered the inn.

...Would it kill you guys to listen to what I had to say?

Then, Megumin turned to face me, who was left behind by the group.

“Well then, would you rather take a bath with me?”

Megumin delightfully giggled to herself

Oi, what are you trying to do all of a sudden? If I say ‘alright, why not?’ then you’ll be flustered won’t you.

When I was at a loss for words, Darkness turned and said.

“We’ll finish quickly, after that you can take your time in the bath. After all, you seem to take a long time to bathe.”

Japanese people tend to take long baths, so it can’t be helped.

“Well otherwise, if you would like to, I can scrub your back like I did before...”

Darkness showed the same expression as Megumin.

“What are you guys saying? Did you eat something wrong? Even though there’s a saying that states that people become really open when they are travelling, you guys should think it through first. If you say such suggestive things, then when I say ‘Well sure!’ then what are you going to do...”

“I’m fine with that. When do you want to go to the bath?”

“Sure, if you really have the guts to do it, then I’ll scrub your back whenever.”

As if they already predicted what I was going to say, the two replied without a moment’s delay. They also showed rather provocative expressions...

...Huh?

What’s happening, since when were these two so accepting?

If I just say the word, these two would actually do it?

Hmm, what should I do... I should say ‘Well sure!’ shouldn’t I...

“Then let’s go, Kazuma.”

Once I saw Megumin’s serene and happy expression, I understood.

That was the expression of someone who believed that I was just shooting my mouth off, and won’t actually do anything in the end.

Part 6

Ah, what is this feeling?

To be honest, I want to do some lewd things, I want to do some affectionate things, I really do.

But I didn't want to betray their trust.

Ah, what were they planning to do? What exactly did they see in me?

Megumin easily said things like 'I don't dislike you', and joking said things like 'I like you', but never said anything like 'Please go out with me' or any other decisive lines for that matter.

On the other hand, Darkness – even though we had almost crossed the line together, even though our relationship had become rather close at the mansion; it feels as if my affection points had been reset.

What did they want from me!?

A girl's heart was hard to understand, so I can't go on the aggressive either...

Even though I thought it was fine, if they told me 'Please don't misunderstand', then our good relationship would crumble.

Damn, since when was I so weak! I, Satou Kazuma, should not be such a feeble person!

Now that I think about it, did I really like them that much?

I couldn't be sure.

Maybe I won't like them so much after I go for a succubus service.

I'm really the worst, but I won't find the answer even if I keep thinking about it

Well, there was need to rush it.

I'll should just go take a bath, and think about it slowly.

Putting these thoughts on hold, I removed my clothes.

— As I posed before the mirror, I can't help but think that this quickly levelling body has been developing quite well.

We arrived at the inn a little past midnight, so there shouldn't be anyone here.

However, a pleasant humming came from the bathing area.

Hearing these hums that showed the owner's good mood, I was sure that there was a girl in the bath.

Even though everyone already knew that I would enter the bath after them, there was still someone here.

This kind of rare situation... was Megumin or Darkness trying to tempt me?

Heh, did they really think I was that much of a wimp?

...Alright, I've decided.

This is too much of a pain.

I don't care if it's Megumin or Darkness, if they would resort to these dastardly methods to tempt me, then I'll show them what's up.

They can beg for mercy all they want. I'll do it no matter what.

Like I care anymore about 'party chemistry' or such troublesome things!

Now that I've finally decided to do it, I can't help but feel a sense of inner peace.

It was foolish of me to trouble myself with such problems.

Those acts were unbecoming of myself.

Yes, from now on, I will live according to my own will.

With a newfound sense of vigor, I proudly pushed open the door—

There was a red-haired onee-san in the bath.

“...Eh? Why, and here I was thinking who it was. It’s you again. Do you still remember this onee-san? We met in the hot-springs at Alcarentia...”

Towards this welcoming and smiling onee-san, I shouted without a trace of hesitation.

“I’ll kill you!!”

“Huh, what!?”

–I entered the bath a fair distance away from the frightened onee-san.

“Ah, this hot spring is quite nice. Also, can you not act so scared of me? I was just a bit frustrated that my ‘moment of clarity’ had been wasted. I thought that one of my companions was in the bath...”

“I-, Is that right? Also, it’s perfectly normal for me to be scared of you, after all, you declared your intention to kill me, even though this is practically the first time we’ve met. How should I say this, your eyes were totally serious, and I could feel the murderous intent from all the way here...”

The onee-san’s cat-like eyes seemed to dilate in fear.

“Well... Now that I think about what onee-san said... If I remember correctly, you’re that teary eyes onee-san whose breasts I stared at right? Of course I remember you, they’re big after all.”

“Umm, I-, ... Even though this is the second time we’ve met, you’re able to say ‘they’re big’ without any hesitation... Isn’t this sexual harassment...?”

“No, I’ve decided. From now on I will no longer hide my true self. I will not avert my gaze, nor will I resist my urges. I will live life my own way.”

“Even though what you said sounds good, but in this situation, I can’t help but think that I’m in a crisis...”

For some reason, the fear in her gaze seemed to increase. As if to hide her body, she submerged her shoulders in the murky-white spring water.



In the face of the kind samaritan Satou Kazuma, was there really a need to be so cautious?

I thought back to my first encounter with this onee-san.

If I remember correctly, she had been talking to the general in charge of destroying Alcarentia – the poison slime Hans – as if they were companions.

That would mean that this onee-san was involved with the Demon King Army. To begin with, shouldn't I be the one who should be cautious?

"By the way, why are you in a place like this? You said you were an adventurer, but aren't there a lot of powerful monsters here? Though saying this is a show of bad manners, but you don't look very strong... Will you be fine?"

Ah, this onee-san wasn't suspicious of me, but rather, she was genuinely worried for me.

Seeing this onee-san's attitude, I released a long sigh.

Usually, I – who barely counts, but am still an adventurer – should be trying to figure out this onee-san's true identity. However, I could not bring myself to hate this onee-san that I just met.

"There's no problem. Even though I'm really weak, but there's a reliable Crimson Magic clansman with us. Anyway, I didn't want to come to this place, but my companions wanted to...so... why is onee-san in this place?"

"Me? ...Well I guess that's true. After working hard every day without rest, to reward myself, I came to my favorite hot spring. Also, I'm looking for an important companion that I can't be found that easily..."

This onee-san seemed to come with good intentions.

"Important companion? So you came to find your lover?"

"No, it's not a lover... hmm, more accurately, I'm looking for my partner, a part of myself that was sealed away somewhere... Well, at this point I feel like giving up."

As onee-san said that, she showed a lonely expression.

“Give up on what? One of my companions is a bit weird, like there’s something wrong with her head...No, she is a person of special circumstances... Do you want to discuss with her? She’s here as well.”

“Ah... Is that person a Crimson Magic clansman? I’m not that type of weird person, so don’t worry.”

Although the onee-san’s expression was stiff, she replied with a bright smile.

“Eh, is that right? Well then... I can listen to your problems I guess. If you don’t mind, could you tell me about it?”

Seeing my relaxed attitude, the onee-san said to me with a smile.

“You’ll listen to my complaints? Hmm... somewhere in the village of crimson magic, something like my other half or companion or evil god...basically, my partner who is a black cat was sealed in a gravestone.”

I feel like I’ve heard this onee-san’s story before.

This was extremely similar to the story I had recently heard from a certain improper crimson-eyed girl.

“When it was released with me, it accumulated intense grudge, and was too hard to keep under control, so I allowed it to slumber a little longer...But when I went back to check on the situation, the seal had already been released, and my partner had been taken by someone.”

Though it was unlikely, could it be–

“... I’m just a bit curious, but is your partner a black cat that can fly and breath flames?”

“Sorry, but I don’t understand what you mean.”

The onee-san gazed at me in serious disbelief.

No, wait a second, why was someone who was just talking about a sealed evil god looking at me with such a gaze?

I quickly recomposed myself.

“Well, my Crimson Magic clansman companion proclaims that her pet black cat is an evil god.”

The moment I mentioned it, the onee-san’s expression became more sinister.

“...A black cat raised by a Crimson Magic clansman? And that person called the cat an evil god? It sounds a bit chunni though...”

“Um, mhm, well that’s all there is...Well anyway, that person said that she was a god of destruction or something in her previous life, so there’s no need to take her seriously.”

I was slightly uncomfortable towards her sudden shift in attitude.

“I-, Is that so? If you don’t mind me asking, is that black cat... Right, does it like lazy people?”

“...I don’t think so? I think that cat is the closest to me, and I don’t think I’m really lazy at all. I put in the most effort in my entire party, and I’m fairly certain I have the most common sense as well.”

“I-, Is that so... Then is it really ferocious?”

For some reason, the onee-san seemed to flinch.

“It’s so timid that a newborn chick was chasing it around.”

“Thanks, that’s enough. It’s not the one I’m looking for.”

Hearing my reply, the onee-san appeared to have confirmed something.

As she stood up from the bath with effort, beads of hot water dripped from her towel and trickled down her skin.

“Then I’ll be going. This place is close to the main front against the demon king army, and the security is lacking to the extent where I encountered the rare existence known as bandits on my way here. You’re better off going back to the capital alright?”

The onee-san squinted her cat-like yellow eyes, and revealed a sincere, heartwarming smile.

“...How should I say this, I can’t explain but I don’t want to treat onee-san like a stranger. I don’t really get this strange feeling... Ah no, I’m not trying to pick you up or anything like that ok?”

Though I said something absurd without thinking, the onee-san didn’t seem troubled at all, but rather, she opened her squinted eyes in surprise.

“This...Um, what a coincidence. To me, you don’t feel like a stranger either. That’s why I’m giving you some advice to get away from here as quickly as possible...After all, there’s the chance you encountered my other-half, and have taken good care of it?”

The Onee-san teased playfully, then left with a happy smile.

As I saw the onee-san off, I got the feeling that I didn’t want to see her as a dangerous person, even if she was related to the Demon King Army... I couldn’t understand why...

If I get the chance to talk to her again, I’ll ask her why she joined the Demon King Army, then...

“...Damn, I didn’t ask for the onee-san’s name!”

Part 7

Morning the next day—

Having slept well at the inn, our party moved towards the fortress with renewed vigor.

“Kazuma, you seem to be in a good mood. You stayed a long time in the bath yesterday, did something happen?”

Walking on the paved road, Megumin happily said.

“I guess something happened. When I went into the hot springs yesterday, I encountered a beautiful onee-san that I met before in Alcarentia.”

In response to my cheerful reply, Megumin suddenly stopped walking.

“Oh, huh? I suppose that’s pretty good. By the way, did you meet in the mixed bath?”

“Yeah. Mhm, now that I think about it, they were quite big. They were probably even bigger than Darkness’.”

It seems that Darkness was listening to the conversation, as she practically jumped when she heard me say that.

“What are you saying all of a sudden! If I leave my eyes off you for a moment, something like this happens... but isn’t a solitary young girl at a fortress checkpoint a bit suspicious?”

Darkness carried her broken armor pieces, and showed an expression between anger and embarrassment.

“It’s fine, that onee-san gave me a warning, just like back in Alcarentia. She also said she encountered some bandits last night so we should be careful.

Yunyun – who energetically listened in on our conversation – asked.

“Uhm, that person was fine after encountering bandits? It’s probably the same group of bandits that we saw yesterday. If it’s a beautiful onee-san, then she shouldn’t have been able to get away...”

“Eh~. Despite your honest appearance, you have such perverted fantasies.”

Megumin – even though she was busy dodging Chomusuke who ran excitedly at her feet – found the time to make snarky remarks at Yunyun.

Hm? Yunyun has a point.

How did that onee-san be unharmed after encountering those bandits?

...Well, that was because she was affiliated with the Demon King Army, but...

Despite her mellow appearance, maybe she was really powerful.

Well, I had no idea what to think of that onee-san.

I should’ve been more cautious towards her than the bandits, but because we were in the same bath, I didn’t think that she was dangerous.

“Wait, isn’t it normal to think that way if we’re talking about bandits!? Also, I don’t want to be called a pervert by Megumin of all people! Haven’t you already taken a bath and shared a bed with Kazuma-san!?”

“Hey, it’s fine if I say it myself, but it’s embarrassing for someone else to say it so shut up!”

Looking at Megumin who received retaliation for her remarks, I thought about that onee-san.

“...Ah, really big.”

““!?””

–After that – with the exception of Aqua being attacked by a great kesaran pesaran after chasing them around – nothing happened in particular that was worth mentioning.

Finally, we arrived at the fortress at the break of dusk.

“Really big~~~”

Now, we were looking up at a fortress, which was about the size of the royal castle.

As expected of the frontline fortress, it looked as if it was impregnable.

The fortress had an overwhelming presence as the cornerstone of the fortress, and was said to be able to accommodate over a thousand people.

“Did those guards say that this fortress is falling to a mere Demon King Army’s general? Even if it is a general, I doubt that it can be done.”

“That’s what I thought, but a Demon King Army general is said to be able to destroy an entire city on its own. In another sense, what’s abnormal is our ability to easily defeat them.”

Hearing Darkness’ response, I thought back to the generals that we had encountered in the past.

–Despite being attacked from numerous directions at the same time, he showed no opening in his defense. His overwhelming swordsmanship was accompanied by his limitless stamina and high magic defense as an undead. No matter what kind of powerful enemy he faces, he can defeat them using the power of ‘Proclamation of Death’. The dullahan knight, Beldia.

–Having the power to change into human form, absolute resistance to magic attacks, and a poisonous composition that would fatally harm anyone that touched him, he was able to use his overwhelming size to crush and devour anything in his way. The poisonous slime of fatality, Hans.

–By constantly evolving by combining with monsters, she (?) possessed the power to various unique traits and all forms of energy as she pleased. The limitless chimera, Sylvia.

–Possessing an indestructible form, his existence could be said to violate the rules of the world itself. The duke of hell, Vanir.

–Not only did she have the ability to use all forms of advanced and teleportation magic’, but she could also use explosion magic. Not only does she have body that is invulnerable to physical attacks, but she also has the ability to use all sorts of special skills like ‘Drain Touch’. The queen of undead, the lich, Wiz.

..When I really thought about their absolute power, I couldn’t help release a long sigh.

It’s a miracle that we’re alive.

What should we do... I thought that we would be fine with such a sturdy fortress and explosion magic, but now I just wanna pack my bags and run away.

It was then —

Just as we were starting to get cold feet, the guards on the fortress walls spotted us, and a group of knights made their grand entrance.

“Adventurers, this is the fortress of the frontlines tasked with repelling the demon king army, what brings you here?”

A knight cautiously approached us.

“We heard that the capital of the nation was under threat, so we came to support the fortress. We have a lot of top-tier jobs, so we thought we would be useful here.”

“Top-tier jobs... I see, then allow me to thank you for your help. However, first I would like you provide proper identification. We need your cooperation with this, since there’s a demon king army general hiding around here. So, first is...”

Megumin took out her adventurer card, and handed it to the knight.

“...Megu-, Megumin...-san... right?”

“Yes that’s my name, you got a problem?”

“No, no! None at all! Please excuse my behavior. You can come in... And you are...Yunyun-san?”

“Y-Yes... That’s my name... I am Yunyun...”

“Oi, from the beginning you seem to have some misgivings about our names. Let’s hear it shall we!?”

Megumin pointed her staff directly at the knight, who replied frantically.

“No, there’s no problem, please excuse my behavior! Then next is... Satou Kazuma. Satou, Kazuma?”

The knight hurriedly returned the adventurer cards to Megumin and Yunyun, and quickly revealed an expression of wonder.

Ah, unlike the two people with weird names, the reason he reacted to my name was probably because I was famous.

After all, our group has had a lot of achievements —

“Satou Kazuma! Are you that dirty rascal Satou Kazuma!? You’re that person who planted devious ideologies in Iris-sama’s mind, and gave Claire-sama and Rain-sama a lot of trouble. You’re the atrocity that was driven out of the castle –!”

“Oi wait a moment.”

The knights here were still spreading this kind of lowlife gossip?

Well, they weren’t wrong, but still...

“I’m extremely sorry. Uhm, this is an important checkpoint for defending the nation from the Demon King Army, so we can’t allow some nameless stranger to enter...”

“Didn’t you just describe me in detail?”

To think he would treat me like some troublesome brat...

Then, the person that looked like their commander came forward.

“So you’re that dirty scum called Satou Kazuma huh? You’re only a petty adventurer so what kind of attitude do you think you’re showing? I have the authority to execute any suspicious people here you know? You’re just a dirty lowlife adventurer, get the hell out of here!”

To show his threat, the commander put his hand on his sword's hilt.

Megumin angrily gripped her staff, and Darkness walked to the front with an uncharacteristically sinister expression.

Seeing the two, the surrounding knights prepared to draw their swords.

“What do you think you adventurers are doing!? You want to fight us, huh!”

Sigh, why were these fellows so impatient.

With the exception of Darkness, it seems that the nobles of this world held very little value towards human lives and rights.

With a serious expression, I walked to the front of the group, and pointed at Darkness who was about to say something.

“Know your place, do you not know who this esteemed lady is!? She is the daughter of the Dustiness family, Dustiness Ford Lalatina-sama!”

“““What!?”””

Hearing what I said, the knight's hurriedly kneeled. Their faces were a shade of deathly white.

Surprised at the sudden turn of events, even Megumin and Yunyun kneeled with the knights.

“Why are you two kneeling as well?”

“Ah, my bad... It happened all of a sudden, so I was caught up in their pace...”

“I-, I didn't know that Darkness-san was a noble...”

The two of them stood up and patted the dirt off their knees. On the other hand, the captain replied to my declaration with a trembling voice.

“A-A-A-, Are you really Dustiness-kyō...? Um, please forgive me for my insolence and my failure to recognize your greatness...! ...Ah...Then please allow us to confirm your identity...It's not that I suspect you, this is part of the job...”

<TL Note: kyō is a honorific for lord>

Without another word, Darkness pulled out her necklace that was evidence of her heritage, along with her adventurer card.

Seeing the two items, the commander's eyes widened like never before, and his face became devoid of color.

"P-P-P-P-P-P-Please excuse my insolence! Not only did I fail to recognize Dustiness-kyō, but I even showed such disgraceful etiquette towards these esteemed man and ladies!"

"Huhu, that is barely enough of an apology! Ah~, when I think about how I was about to be slashed viciously, I can't help but feel shaken and hurt to my core~. That was an incident that would forever be a mental scar."

Sniff sniff

"AUGH! When I think about what just happened, my heart feels as if it would explode...!"

Facing the commander that was putting his full effort into apologizing, I intentionally pressed on my chest.

It seems that Megumin had caught on as well–

"That won't do! Ah, what kind of attitude was that? To think you would show such disgraceful behavior towards the followers of Lalatina ojou-sama!"

As Megumin said that, she let out her anger by poking the end of her staff at the commander's face.

"Hurry up and apologize! Towards us who you were planning to attack a second ago, please say 'I'm very sorry!'"

As Megumin poked his face, Aqua – who had been uninvolved until just now – began to restlessly shake the commander's shoulders. Although the commander seemed to be at his wit's end, he closed his eyes as if to declare his intention to surrender. All he could do was lower his head towards Darkness.

“S-, Sorry. I’m very sorry. For such insolence towards Dustiness-kyō and her subordinates, the punishment should be seppuku... but, uhm...”

As if I was his trusted companion, I put my hand on the choking commander’s shoulder.

“No no, we won’t ask for so much, after all, you were just doing your jobs. Anyhow, we’re tired after a long day’s trek, so we won’t ask too much of you. That said, could you prepare an accommodation that we can use during our time here?”

“Of course! We will provide Dustiness-kyō and her followers the best rooms available here!”

Darkness could only wordlessly lower her head towards the captain who remained in his bowing position.

CHAPTER 4

GIFTING THESE GODS LACKING INFLUENCE WITH SINCERE PRAYERS!

Part 1

After everyone was assigned a room, I put my luggage into my quarters and started exploring the interior of the fort with Aqua to kill time.

The adventurers we passed by looked anxious. The battle didn't seem to be going well,

A tense atmosphere loomed over the fort.

Out of curiosity, Aqua and I began meddling with the things inside the room labelled 'Control Room'.

"Hey Kazuma. There are mysterious buttons and control sticks everywhere, it's like they want me to press them."

"They definitely want you to press them. Or rather, it would be strange for you not to press them when they are right beside your hand."

"Did you people barge in here to mess around!? This is the control stick for the drawbridge, main gate and traps, you absolutely cannot press them! You hear that, absolutely not!?"

After hearing the soldiers say things that a comedian would say, Aqua reacted as I expected.

"Since you said this much, it would be a shame if I don't press them. First will be the button inside that glass cover..."

"That is the self destruction button when we need to abandon the fort, please don't press it! Don't press... Didn't I tell you no, get out!"

We were chased out by the soldier who suddenly flipped out, and stood outside the room for a moment.

“We got chased out again. The people here are all very high strung.”

“It’s a fort at the frontlines, everyone is really tense.”

We fiddle with everything in the rooms we visit, and after being chased out of them, we finally ran out of places to go.

“It can’t be help. I think there is a free cookhouse, let’s freeload over there.”

“That sounds great, should I bring the wine in my luggage over?”

I was wondering why her pack was bulging so much, so she even brought wine with her.

At this moment —

“Aqua-sama!? Aren’t you Aqua-sama!?”

A familiar voice came from the other end of the corridor.

And the familiar looking man...

“Isn’t that Katsuragi? It’s been a while.”

“It’s Mitsurugi! Did you say it wrong on purpose!? Remember my name properly!”

It was the Sword Master who uses a magic sword, Mitsurugi.

“Aqua-sama, long time no see! You look well and energetic...”

“Yes, I’m always full of life. Magic sword guy, are you doing well? By the way, where are the two harem girls that follow you around?”

“Harem girls!? No, well, since the battle is going badly, it would be dangerous for them to stay here, so I had them retreat back to the capital... That’s right!”

Mitsurugi shifted his gaze from Aqua to me.

“Satou, why did you bring Aqua-sama to such a dangerous place? Do you know where this place is!?”

“I know. This is the foremost frontline in the war against the Demon King Army. The Demon King Army boss will attack this place periodically, right?”

Mitsurugi showed an expression that says ‘why are you here if you know that’.

“We are here to help you hardworking people. The opponent proclaimed to be an evil god right? Then it is time for me, a god to do my part.”

Aqua did say that she couldn’t forgive the person who proclaimed to be an evil god without her permission, and said that reason naturally now.

“Aqua-sama wants to fight that woman!? T-This is... It’s true that Aqua-sama might be able to contend with her, but that woman is dangerous. She almost took down the fort by herself.”

Mitsurugi was worried about Aqua.

“The Demon King Army Boss is a woman huh... even though the opponent proclaimed to be an evil god, there are several Japanese with cheat abilities here right? And you, the magic sword user who lost to me but is more powerful than most people is here. Although you did lose to me. The enemy is just one person but you all are having a hard time, why?”

“Stop nagging about me losing, you are the one who refused my revenge match... Forget it, there’s a reason why we are pushed to the brink. Didn’t you see that?”

... That?

Aqua and I looked baffled.

“From your face, you probably didn’t. You are free right? Let me show you something nice.”

Mitsurugi started leading the way after saying that.

—— Mitsurugi led us out of the fort, and we saw that scene.

It was a portion of the outer wall that bore the fate of the fort.

One side of the tough outer walls was on the verge of collapse after repeated assault.

“Hey, could that be...”

And I was familiar with the traces of the powerful impact that covered it.

That’s normal since I got to see the such marks every day.

My title of Explosion Connoisseur given by Megumin was not just for show.

“Yes. The Demon King Army Boss Wolbach can use explosion magic.”

Seeing my dumbstruck visage, Mitsurugi could only smile wryly.

Part 2

After Aqua and I parted with Mitsurugi, I gathered everyone into a room.

“Alright. Let’s start deciding our future plans.”

I swivelled my head and looked at all of them, as I spoke while sitting on the bed.

“What future plans? I just met the commander of this fort and told him we have experience in defeating a number of Demon King Army Bosses, so he relinquished his command authority to us.”

After knowing that Darkness had stirred up more trouble when I wasn’t paying attention, I felt the urge to grab my head and scream.

To be frank, it was too much for us this time.

My original plan was to protect ourselves with the fort, and when the enemy showed up to execute some schemes, we will launch a preemptive attack with explosion, the offensive spell with the longest range.

It doesn’t matter if the opponent is a spirit, god or devil. Explosion can damage everything in this world.

Going by my original plan, this could defeat most of the enemy. But if the enemy could use the same spell, we will lose the advantage of spell attack range.

“No, actually, that Boss named Wolbach can use explosion magic.”

“!?”

When she heard what I said, kicked her chair back and stood up.

She reacted to the term ‘explosion magic’.

“Explosion!? T-This is beyond my expectation...Because of Megumin, I know the might of this spell very well. To be honest, I don’t know how to defend against it...”

Yunyun lowered her head apologetically.

“It’s fine, leave it to me! I took the full blunt of an explosion before! I will be the bait. When the enemy showed an opening after casting her spell, use the chance to overwhelm her.”

“You don’t have your armour right now. Even with Aqua’s buffing spell, there’s no guarantee that you will be safe.”

In the fight with the bone dragon earlier, Darkness’ armour was broken. She slouched her shoulders unhappily.

Aqua nodded in agreement.

“That’s how it is. Even though we made a trip here, I think we should let that person proclaiming to be an evil god off. I am not being lenient, just that I have never heard about a minor evil god named Wolbach before, she is rather pitiful right?”

The self proclaimed goddess who was the first to back off when she learned that our adversary knows explosion magic.

At this moment, Megumin who was standing still flicked her cape.

“I am Megumin! The number one mage in Axel, the one who pursues the ultimate explosion spell! The Demon King Army Boss claims to be an evil god and is a user of explosion magic...!? That’s the worthy rival I had been looking for!”

“Huh!?”

For some reason, Yunyun was surprised by Megumin’s announcement.

“What do you mean by ‘huh’, only a user of explosion magic is worthy of being my rival. It would be just the way I want it if I die from her explosion magic! Yes, I would have no regrets if I go out in such a grand way!!”

When she heard Megumin’s incorrigible words, Yunyun pestered her with tears in her eyes.

“What nonsense are you saying!? Aren’t I Megumin’s rival!? Why did you promote a Demon King Army Boss you never met before to a rival so easily!”

“W-Why are you freaking out so suddenly!? What a troublesome child, if you want me to acknowledge you as my true rival, then learn explosion magic. I will then take you along for my stroll every day.”

“I don’t want to learn explosion magic, and I’m fine even if you go on that kind of stroll without me! Our opponent this time can use explosion! Such an opponent...”

“How dare you say you don’t want to learn explosion!? Alright, I will treat this as a challenge against me and accept it! It’s been awhile since our last duel. If you lose, you will save your skill points until you can learn explosion!”

“I-I don’t want such a duel! A duel that will decide the course of my life, I will never... Wait, Megumin, your eyes are turning red! Are you serious!? Hey, are you really serious!?”

I ignored the squabbling couple and continued stating our plan from now on.

“Megumin did say some foolish things, but the enemy this time is still too dangerous. We might get wiped out with just one shot. If we are blown to crisp, Aqua’s resurrection magic won’t work. So let’s withdraw...”

“What the hell are you saying!? How can I run before such an opponent!? This is my destined rival, yes, there are no doubts about it!”

Megumin who was burning up put one leg onto the chair with red eyes gleaming in her eyes.

“The one who is targeting my familiar Chomusuke is the user of explosion magic, the Demon King Army Boss proclaiming to be an evil god! There is no other way but for me to defeat Wolbach, and take over her title of Boss and evil god!”

“What are you going on about... The risk is too much this time. We would be at a disadvantage if this turn into a gamble which the first one to attack wins.”

“There is no disadvantage at all. The spell I like is explosion magic. My hobby is explosion magic. If you talk about me, it’s explosion magic. That’s right, I am the explosion magic user from Axel. Ever since I learned this spell, I have been using it every day without fail. Be it speed, accuracy and destructive power, I am confident that no one in this world is better at explosion magic than me!”

After Megumin said all that, she breathed out confidently.

“Didn’t you lose to Wiz when we fought the Destroyer?”

“That’s history now. With my increase in level, I learned all sorts of skill related to increasing the power of explosion magic. I competed the power of our explosion spells with Wiz some time ago and won. I am the number one in Axel right now.”

She even did all that while I wasn’t paying attention.

“It will be fine. When I couldn’t sleep at night, I will chant explosion magic until I doze off. No matter who my opponent is, I will finish my incantation before them!”

“What the hell, you did something so dangerous!?”

As I was about to lecture Megumin.

The entire fort shook with a deafening boom.

The ceiling of the room began to crumble, and everyone – except for Megumin – braced themselves.

I listened to Megumin’s explosion every day, so it was impossible for me to identify that sound wrongly.

What shook the fort just now was definitely explosion magic.

Amidst the alarm that rang through the entire fort, Megumin muttered to herself with a troubled expression.

“Ugh, that tremor is quite high in level. Adding the mana wavelength that was released before the spell was cast, this is definitely a well executed explosion. This spell wasn’t learnt to show off or during a moment of stupidity.”

“Why are you giving an evaluation?”

But as an explosion connoisseur, I could tell the quality of this spell was high.

If I was to judge it, I would give it more than 90 points.

“Anyway, hurry up Megumin. Now is the chance to defeat the attacking Demon King Army Boss!”

“Huh? W-What’s with you Kazuma, your attitude flipped 180 degrees.”

I slapped on my chest plate and armour, then stood up with my weapon in hand.

I then said to the others who were shocked by my actions ——

“Since she cast explosion just now, it means she won’t be able to cast explosion again today.”

“Ah!” x3

Even if the enemy was a boss, it was still impossible to cast explosion which drains a huge amount of mana twice in a day.

After all, even Wiz who was also a Demon King Army boss would exhaust most of her mana after firing one explosion.

Since the opponent’s mana was used up, we didn’t need to worry when we show up before the enemy.

I dashed out of the room, confirmed that the others were following, then headed to the outer wall ravaged by multiple explosion shown to me by Mitsurugi.

When we reached the scene panting,

“How terrible.”

After taking a shot of explosion on top of the previous damaged cracks, a part of the outer wall had been reduced to a pile of rubble, along with the huge crater on the ground.

There were other adventurers and knights who rushed here just like I did.

I found a familiar face and asked after approaching him.

“Hey, where did the Demon King Army Boss go? Wouldn’t it be easy to defeat her since she is out of mana?”

I asked Mitsurugi who was staring blankly at the site of destruction and asked where the culprit was.

And the answer was ——

“Wolbach is long gone... This is the reason why we are in such a pinch. The evil god Wolbach will show up suddenly, cast explosion from afar, then retreat via teleport before we can get near her.”

Mitsurugi continued——

“The elites of the Demon King Army is standing by in the forest near the fort. She probably escaped there, and will return after recovering her mana. Not only do they have great numbers, the forest is the home ground of the monsters. We will definitely lose if we fight outside the walls of the fort and with the opponent having the advantage of terrain. But if we keep on defending the fort, once the outer wall is completely destroyed, the elites that had been standing by will use the chance to launch an attack.”

The situation just now had probably happened many times. The people nearby all lowered their heads weakly.

If we go after the boss who cast her explosion, we will be hampered by their elite forces. If we wait inside the fort for them to attack, we would be blasted by explosion magic.

Laying siege to the fort then forcing the people out with explosion magic. This was just overwhelming with brute force, but it was super effective.

After Mitsurugi finished.

“We can only do something if either Wolbach or the Demon King Army elites is gone...”

He gripped the hilt of his magic sword and closed his eyes with frustration ——

“—— Okay, let's escape.”

“It's decided then. I will make a bed for Emperor Zell after going back to Axel. One that is more comfortable than that evil husk, a high quality bed Emperor Zell would be

happy with. It's fine, the likes of Demon King Army Bosses will be killed in an instance after Emperor Zell grows up."

After returning to my room, Aqua and I made preparations to go home.

Darkness said frantically after seeing that.

"W-Wait Kazuma, I have been forced to take command of this fort. If I say 'I'm quitting and going home', it would be a little..."

"Why did you take on such a troublesome job at such a time!?"

"It's your fault for using my name to intimidate them!"

As I was squabbling with Darkness.

"Hmm? Where did Yunyun go? Wasn't she with us just now?"

"If you are looking for Yunyun, she is using magic to help with the repairs of the outer walls."

"I see, as expected of a capable Crimson Magic Clansman. I will check if anybody is hurt."

"Do tell me who is the 'incapable' Crimson Magic Clansman."

Aqua ran away from Megumin whose eyes were glowing, as she said something befitting her role as a priest on this rare occasion and left the room.

Darkness nodded as she watched this scene.

"Aqua and Yunyun are helping in their own way. Amazing, as expected of veteran adventurers. Hey Kazuma, we are already veteran adventurers, right?"

Darkness, whose eyes were sparkling from excitement in such an emergency irked me.

Seemed like she admired heroes and the braves.

It would be impossible for her to abandon the fort that was in crisis.

As I was wondering how to convince her stubborn mind, Megumin who was beside her showed an apologetic face.

“Hey Kazuma... I know this is dangerous, but can you give me a chance? Everyone can just wait in the fort. I will wait for Wolbach who might show up anytime, and throw an explosion into her face once she appears.”

It was rare seeing her lower her head with a complicated expression.

... Really, all of them were trouble.

“... I have enemy detection, farsight and hide skills, the chance of our ambush working will increase if I go with you. I will just accompany you, but it will be up to you when the enemy shows up.”

Megumin’s eyes widen when she heard what I said, and then her mouth slowly curled into a smile.

“Leave it to me!”

Megumin who was all smiles with her eyes glowing red puffed her petite chest, and looked really reliable.

Part 3

The next day.

Inside the vast forest beside the fort, I climbed onto a tree to surveil the area around the fort.

“The Demon King Army is already this close.”

A group that seemed to belong to the Demon King Army was setting up formation in the forest a few kilometers away from the fort.

I couldn't make out what type of monsters were there, but there were tons of them.

If they assault the fort after the outer walls and traps were gone, it would be a matter of time before the fort falls.

I got down from the tree and told Megumin and the others the situation.

“According to the people in the fort, Wolbach comes alone when she uses explosion magic. I came up with a plan around this point.”

I looked one round at everyone here and continued:

“First, we will use my hide skill to sneak into the vicinity. Megumin will cast her spell before they notice us. If the other party detects us, Yunyun will use refraction magic to conceal Megumin, Aqua will buff Darkness with support spells, who will then rush forth to get their attention. Aqua and I will cover Darkness and create an opening. When Megumin feels that the time is right, you can fire your spell at the enemy... Everyone understand?”

I confirmed the plan with everyone again, and saw that they were all hyped up...

“Kazuma Kazuma, I think someone needs to protect this child. How can we expose such a small and cute creature to danger... Hey, that hurts. You are fine with everyone else, so why do you keep scratching me?”

Aqua frowned in pain when she tried to pick up Chomusuke.

The furball who was usually docile was excited since early in the morning, and kept following everyone.

It would be dangerous and so I left it in the room, but it kept following.

After handing Chomusuke that was especially energetic today to Yunyun, I said to Aqua and Darkness:

“Alright, we are all set. We just need to wait for that bitch Wolbach to come.”

“Hey Kazuma, my legs are wobbly.”

“Weren’t you bragging before we set off?”

—— Just how long did we hid in the forest?

In the forest near the fort where we were hiding, the Boss of the Demon King Army I had been hearing about appeared.

She wore a large hat and a plain robe to cover her body, and headed for the fort at a leisurely pace.

Even though she tried to obscure her body shape, I was certain she was a woman.

She was relaxed in her movement because she could cast explosion magic from far away if our side tried to intercept her, and make the first strike at any moment.

And after casting her spell, she just needed to escape with teleport.

“What an annoying tactic. Can’t she just face us in a proper fight?”

“If that boss heard what you said, she will definitely say ‘I don’t want to hear that from you’.”

Darkness made a proper retort after hearing my complaint.

While Darkness was receiving buffs from Aqua, the robed woman stopped in her tracks.

The fort was probably right in her explosion magic range, and she stood some distance away from us.

“Hey Megumin, start chanting your spell quietly now. There is no need to talk to the enemy, just finish this with a pre-emptive strike.”

“You just talked about a proper fight a moment ago. What a sly tactic, but never mind, I will listen to you this time. I have to try to avoid letting Darkness tank an explosion spell.”

Darkness looked really excited as if she was thinking ‘I might be taking a really big shot later’. I felt bad for her, but we should finish this quickly and go back.

At this moment.

The robed woman seemed to notice something and looked straight at our direction.

Did she see through my hide skill?

She was still for a moment, then started walking this way...

“She found us! Megumin, chant your spell openly! Shoot it in her face before she could cast hers!”

“Leave it to me Kazuma!”

Megumin started her incantation.

“Hya, what’s wrong Chomusuke!? Why are you writhing about all of a sudden!?”

Chomusuke who was in Yunyun’s arms was struggling mightily to jump out.

I don’t know why the furball was acting up, but I don’t have time to care.

Before Megumin finishes her incantation, we have to draw the enemy’s attention!

“Darkness, Aqua! Stall for time!”

I shouted to the two of them as I leaped out of the woods.

The Demon King Army Boss who was tilting her head in confusion as she approached us stopped in surprise when she saw me appearing suddenly.

“Hey Kazuma, I should stay behind in case of an emergency. After all, no one can revive the party if anything happens to me! You hear me!?”

“Stop blabbering and follow! I will be blown to smithereens if I get hit by explosion anyway, even though this isn’t my plan, the only one who can rival a self-proclaimed evil god would be you!”

I dragged Aqua who wanted to run away along, and face down the Demon King Army Boss.

Darkness who caught up after some time stood in front of us.

... I thought the robed woman will attack immediately, but she stood still in place with a shocked face.

“... What’s the matter? You looked surprised by seeing us. Are you feeling afraid after seeing me, who is famous in the Demon King Army?”

“Maybe she is surprised after seeing your weird and funny face.”

I was thinking how to punish Aqua who poured cold water over me when the robed woman took her hat off and revealed her face.

—— Under that hat was that Onee-san with short red hair and cat-like yellow eyes.

That’s right, the Onee-san who bathed with me a few times.

At the same time, Yunyun’s surprised gasp came from behind.

“... What are you doing here?”

“That should be my line. Aren’t you that Onee-san who likes to bathe?”

To be honest, I already had a faint suspicion.

I knew from long ago that she was related to the Demon King Army.

And back in Alcanretia, she didn't use honorifics when speaking with the Boss Hans. I think Hans called this Onee-san Hans, but I wasn't too sure since it's been really long.

Now that I think about it, I never tried to find out who she was because I don't want to be an enemy with the Onee-san I bathed with, someone that doesn't feel like a stranger.

The Onee-san... No, the Demon King Army Boss said:

"By the way, I haven't introduced myself. My name is Wolbach, one of the Bosses of the Demon King Army. The patron goddess of sloth and violence, Wolbach."

She made an intimidating announcement as her cat like pupil narrowed.

... What a pain, I have to fight her?

"... Well, I actually didn't know that Onee-san is related to the Demon King Army. But I have something to ask you. You don't look like a bad person to me. Why did you become a Demon King Army Boss?"

It was simply a curious question of mine.

"Why huh. According to tradition, this should be my reply right?"

She showed a sinister smile.

"—— If you want to know, you will have to defeat me."

She then revealed a lonely and empty smile.

Damn it, so we still needed to fight?

I felt a dull pain in my chest when I saw her smile. As I was thinking about how I could avoid this battle...

"—— Hey, even though you said such deep words and built a mysterious atmosphere, I still have to cut you off here. I could sense some godly aura from you, but the patron goddess of sloth and violence? If you are not honest, I will sue you for bending the truth. Just say that you are an evil god."

In a blink of an eye.

Aqua who was all cowardly suddenly destroyed the solemn atmosphere.

Wolbach seemed troubled after someone she met for the first time said something so mean.

Did Aqua said Wolbach had some godly aura?

So the opponent wasn't just claiming so baselessly, but a real evil god?

"Although I am the patron of emotions that had doesn't seem too good. I was still a proper goddess. I am not exaggerating okay?"

"You are lying! Hey Kazuma, this woman is talking nonsense! The goddess that are officially recognized in this world are just Eris and me! Apologize! Proclaiming to be a goddess and sully the name of pure, beautiful and respectful real goddesses, apologize for doing that!"

I always call Aqua a self-proclaimed goddess, but she was using this chance to make a scene.

Wolbach who was just troubled in the beginning raised her eyebrows in anger after hearing that.

"Hey, what are you saying all of a sudden!? I am a proper goddess, just that after I joined the Demon King Army, the crazy Axis cultist call me an evil god on their own, so I had no choice but to roll with it! And I don't need a priest I never met before to lecture me on that!"

"You say my devotees are crazy!? How dare you treat the world renown Axis cult like idiots, are you really a god? Do you have any believers? Puhehe, I have never heard of a minor god called Wolbach!"

Wolbach started trembling because of Aqua's mocking.

"H-How dare a mortal insult a god, don't think you can get away with this! Since you are a priest, you should treat other gods with respect!"



Aqua flicked her hair as she looked at the agitated Wolbach.

“Mortal? You say I am a mortal? I am calling you out on proclaiming to be a goddess because your eyes are blind!”

I felt like retorting ‘you are the one who is blind since you bought a chicken egg’.

Aqua puffed her chest out as if she wanted to show off her hagoromo.

In a more forceful manner than how she was usually, Aqua stated her name to Wolbach.

“I am Aqua. That’s right, the goddess of Aqua worshipped by the Axis cult! A mere minor god that I have never heard of before dare lecture me? Know your place!”

“Huh!?”

Wolbach was dumbfounded, and stared at the arrogant Aqua.

“... You will receive divine retribution if you impersonate a goddess ok?”

“Apologize! Apologize for that right now!”

The goddess (lol) Aqua who was not even acknowledged by an evil god stomped forth angrily and grabbed Wolbach’s robe.

“Hey, stop that you impudent fool, I will give you divine punishment! I will make you roll around tiredly in bed on your precious day off, and waste your vacation!”

“Try it if you dare! I will curse your toilet to not flush even though there is someone waiting for you outside!”

“Goddesses don’t use the bathroom, so I’m not scared!”

“I live every day like a holiday, so I’m not afraid of you!”

What should I do?

The two of them were goddesses right? But they were fighting so childishly even when they just met.

I thought goddesses were a greater and more respectable existence.

“Hey Kazuma, can we really leave them alone?”

“I think so too. The opponent is still a Boss, we can’t ignore them...”

As I was whispering to Darkness, Aqua who was being grabbed couldn’t stand it anymore and reached for the heavens.

A fog appeared on her beckoning, and they slowly turned into orbs of water.

... That idiot, she forgot her objective was to taunt and stall the enemy!

And what was Megumin doing, she should be done by now!

“Seems like I have to let you have a taste of the prowess of the water goddess when serious! How dare an evil god like you act so haughtily! You don’t even have devotees who are pure, just and free like mine!”

“A, a retard like you is really the goddess of water? But it’s your problematic believers’ fault that I am called an evil god! I have believers in the Demon King Army too!! And you are just a super minor god compared to Goddess Eris anyway!!”

.....

“Sacred Create Water!”

“Tel, ‘Teleport’!!”

Aqua who had flipped out cast her spell and summoned a huge amount of water ——
!

CHAPTER 5

GIFTING A FATEFUL EXPLOSION TO THIS EVIL GOD!

Part 1

The next day; After Aqua had caused trouble in our encounter with Wolbach—

“There’ll be no problem this time. Please let me do it!”

Megumin – who had hesitated to attack Wolbach yesterday – rushed into my room.

“Will you really be fine? What was up with you yesterday...? Was it because the enemy looked like a human? I mean, I understand how you feel, since I can’t attack such a beautiful onee-san without hesitation either...”

Megumin furiously shook her head.

“To me, it doesn’t matter if the enemy is a human or a child. As long as they provide large experience points, I will attack without remorse, but...um...”

Like yesterday, Megumin hesitated to speak her mind.

She had been a little strange since yesterday.

Well, to be fair, even Yunyun seemed troubled by yesterday’s event. Her usual excitement was nowhere to be seen, and she had holed herself up in her room ever since.

Before coming here, I had noticed that Megumin seemed to be particularly sensitive to the name ‘Wolbach’. Perhaps she had a secret she couldn’t tell me about...

“I don’t really know too much about your situation, but we can’t use an ambush tactic anymore. Our target will be more cautious from now on, thanks to a certain idiot who dumped water on her. Anyhow, even though the fortress walls weren’t struck by explosion magic, it still received damage.”

It was a mistake to make an ambush in the forest near the fortress.

Aqua's flood of water dealt the final blow to the fortress, which was already on its last legs.

Although she was forced to repair the fortress walls against her will, that was still nothing compared to what she had done.

The worst part, was that we let our enemy know that we had the goddess Aqua on our side.

Even though this piece of junk lived day-to-day eating and sleeping without a care in the world, even though she would happily play with children despite her age, even though she would still get lost in Axel despite having spent such a long time there, she was actually a goddess.

After yesterday's incident, there was no doubt that the enemy would be cautious of an ambush.

"...Is that so...? Well, if there's anything you need help with please feel free to call me. Even though I say that, my only strength is explosion magic..."

Megumin showed a wry smile.

"We still need to make a plan with everyone, so just take it easy-"

And go eat something...

Just as I was about to say this—

At the beckon of a familiar roar, the fortress began to shake violently.

—Megumin and I rushed to the scene.

When we arrived, the others were already inspecting the situation.

As we arrived—

"We need some help here! Go call someone who knows earth magic or golem summoning magic! We need to reinforce the walls before they collapse!"

The knights and adventurers were hurriedly moving to repair the crumbling wall.

I tried to look for Wolbach—

“There’s not even a trace of her here... She probably used teleport again to escape and buy herself time to recover her magic power.”

Said Megumin, who looked for Wolbach with me.

Using explosion magic and then teleporting away—

It was a simple, but extremely effective strategy.

—It was a strategy that we couldn’t allow to continue.

I moved towards the fortress wall, and planned to use ‘Create Earth’ to create some materials that could be used to repair the castle wall. I should contribute at least this much...

“—Ah! Oi, What happened here!? Why does the wall look worse than before!?”

A familiar voice came from beside us.

“...What’s this costume, Aqua?”

Aqua – who was dressed in construction worker clothes – reminded me of the time when we had first arrived in Axel. Her head was wrapped in a bandana.

“What do you mean by ‘What’s this costume’? Kazuma told me to participate in the fortress repairs, so I went to prepare...But then what happened here!? Who did such a terrible thing to our work!?”

“It was that evil god from yesterday. Didn’t I already tell you that she was the one destroying the fortress walls? Well, since you’ve already spent the effort to dress up, hurry up and go help everyone with the repairs over there.”

As I said that, I casted ‘Create Earth’ on a damaged portion of the castle wall.

...This work will continue for a while...

The adventurers and soldiers looked absolutely uninspired.

They gathered the rubble, and tried to fit it into the holes of the wall—

“Wait a second! You can’t do it like that! When constructing a wall, you need to first consolidate the foundation and then create an embankment around it. After that, use the plaster to reinforce the connections. So first do it like this, and then this. Finally, it should be like this!”

Aqua’s excited voice came from behind me.

She must’ve been reminded of the time when we were constructing the outer wall of Axel.

Well, despite how she looked, she seemed to like manual labor.

As I was thinking about such pointless things, a commotion seemed to have begun where Aqua was.

As I turned to look behind me, Megumin was stacking the dirt up, and Aqua worked on the cracks of the wall—

“How are you so fast!? And this quality...!? Oi, Wait a sec!? What’s happening here!? Since when did you learn such high-level construction skills!”

I exclaimed in surprise.

With a tone of ‘what are you saying now?’, Aqua replied:

“Who do you think I am? When I told the construction boss ‘I have adventurer work to do, so I’m not going to work anymore.’, he went down on his hands and knees to beg me to give up adventurer work, and become a full-time employee!”

For real? The construction boss never tried to stop me though...

Well, I don’t really care about that.

When I was working with her, I didn’t really pay attention to what she did, but from the perspective of a spectator, there was no doubt that her techniques were on the level of a pro.

For a while now, I've been wondering why she learned so many pointless skills, but in this rare occasion, her skills were actually useful.

Prior to this, the people of the fortress had a rather heavy mood, after all, the fortress was on the verge of collapsing due to Wolbach's attacks.

That's why we tried to ambush her...

However, the parts of the wall that were repaired by Aqua were even harder than before.

"Oi, aren't your skills a bit too perfect? Do you have some wall-repairing cheat or something? Also, isn't this drying too fast?"

"Who do you take the Me, goddess of water for? I can control the water inside this to make it dry quicker you know? Think back, when it's my turn to wash the clothes, the clothes always dry really quickly right?"

From now on, I'll leave all the chores to her.

Anyhow—

"...This'll work!"

Part 2

As usual, the fortress began to shake with a violent roar.

To think that she would continue to diligently cast explosion...

I turned to face Aqua, who became idiotically excited at the signal of the sound, and said:

“Yo Repair Chief, it’s your time to shine.”

“Leave it to me! Everyone, follow me! Today I’ll let you witness the chief’s artistry!”

“Chief, we’ll leave it to you!”

“Repair Chief!”

“Repair Chief, I’ll be in your care!”

At my command, Aqua – accompanied by a group of adventurers and soldiers – pridefully walked to the scene.

Darkness – who had temporarily become the commander of the fortress – had given Aqua the amusing title of ‘Repair Chief’.

“Repair Chief. Your task today is very important. The fate of the fortress is in your hands... then, please go ahead.”

“I understand commander! There’ll be no problem, I’m the chief after all. Since I am such an impressive chief, there’s no way I would lose to that petty evil god!”

“Chief!”

“As expected of the chief! Let’s go, the walls are waiting for us to repair it! Let’s see your magnificent performance today!”

The chief – who had been completely tricked by Darkness – cheerfully entered her stage.

—Three days after Aqua recieved the wageless and powerless title of ‘Repair Chief’.

Even though it was being attacked by explosion every day, the fortress walls were only becoming thicker and stronger with each passing day.

Why didn’t that idiot do this for a living?

The people whom had been forced to worked around the clock before gradually regained their spirits. Aqua, on the other hand, seemed to gleefully enjoying being called ‘Chief’ by her now-subordinates. She even shared the wine she had brought with everyone. It wouldn’t be wrong to say that everyone was exploding with confidence.

“...Uhm, where did that heavy mood a while back go?”

“Mhm... I wasted a night thinking about that...”

The two Crimson Magic clansmen who saw Aqua off showed troubled expressions.



I understood how they felt, but now was the time for more reliable strategies.

Because we were able to drag this out, we were able to reinforce the fortress walls, and sent a magician with teleportation to report to the capital.

Since we had managed to turn the battle into a stalemate despite the limited resources, the higher-ups began to believe that if they invested more efforts into this battle, we would eventually be able to turn this around. As a result, they began to send more supplies, as well as reinforcements of adventurers and knights.

The chief who was dearly loved by her subordinates, who carried the fate of the fortress on her shoulders, did not seem to treat the daily explosions as anything special.

In the end, she not only repaired and expanded the walls, she even began to make some magnificent murals on them—

“Wolbach’s coming!”

In response to this different-from-usual announcement, Aqua and I turned to look at each other.

Part 3

“—What is this!?”

Wolbach uncontrollably trembled when she saw the main gate of the fortress.

“W-What do you mean by ‘what is this!’?”

I asked fearfully under the gaze of the adventurers and soldiers.

As the person whom was most familiar with Wolbach, and as someone who had held a conversation with her in the past, I went to meet her.

She seemed to be displeased with my attitude, and furiously stamped her foot.

“I’m talking about the walls! It looked like it was on the verge of collapse a while ago, so how did it become like this!? Aren’t the walls thicker than last time!?”

“You’ll have to ask Aqua about that...”

“So it’s that woman’s fault—!”

Wolbach reacted intensely the moment I mentioned Aqua.

She probably held a grudge regarding their earlier encounter.

Then—

“Ah hah~, and here I thought someone important came...Hm? Isn’t this, um... Who is this person?”

“Wolbach! ...It seems like it’s time for us to settle our differences... Um, eh?”

Wolbach prepared to confront Aqua, who had appeared behind me in a nonchalant manner. Then she—

Froze at the sight of Darkness’ group. Rather, it was more precise to say that Wolbach froze after seeing Megumin, who carried Chomusuke in her arms.

Wolbach stared at Chomusuke.

And Chomusuke stared back at her.

Seeing the evil god and the creature stare at one another, Aqua could no longer remain silent.

“Oi, stop, stop! Can you not look at our Chomusuke like that!? Even though your face is so crude, could it be... that you are the type to like cute dolls and stuff? That means your interests are a lot like Darkness’...”

“Oi Aqua, I don’t like those kinds of dolls...! Why would some like me...!”

Aqua ignored Darkness, who began to furiously rebut her claims, and walked beside me. She stood in the way of Wolbach and Chomusuke’s seemingly intimate exchange.

“I’m looking at it because it’s cute... but, well, it actually is quite cute...-?”

Wolbach suddenly stopped murmuring.

“Oi, you, what did you call that black cat?”

“Didn’t I just call it Chomusuke? Well, at first I thought the name was quite strange, but recently, I’ve begun to think that it’s actually quite nice.”

“Oi, can you please not call its magnificent and powerful name strange?”

Hearing Aqua and Megumin’s short exchange, Wolbach—

“What the heck is this!?”

—shouted in disbelief, and slowly walked towards us.

However, she quickly stopped in her tracks.

Despite her emotional outburst, it seems that she was still aware of the adventurers standing behind us.

With a look of regret, she said:

“...Ah...uhm, if you don’t mind I just want to say something. I think that that child is a female... So I don’t think its name is very suitable...”

“Chomusuke is Chomusuke. It is my familiar and my pet.”

“Wh-What!? Oi, What did you say!? Why is my other half being treated so cruelly!?”

Wolbach suddenly spouted such outlandish things.

“...Hah, and here I was wondering why your divinity was so low. So it’s because our child here has taken half of your power? ...Hoho, with my peerless vision, I can see that some sort of seal has been placed on Chomusuke.

Said Aqua, who approached and examined Chomusuke.

In a way that seemed to be more than mere coincidence, Chomusuke began to struggle out of the hold of Megumin’s arms. It seems that it wanted to go to Wolbach.

“Ah...”

Seeking her other half, Wolbach extended her arm and began to slowly walk towards us.

“We can’t let her have it! Megumin, don’t let go of Chomusuke alright!?”

“Wait a second! Oi, that child is my other half you know!? This should be the time for an emotional reunion between long lost other halves!”

Wolbach protested with a teary face.

“I don’t know what you want with our Chomusuke, but can you promise to not oppose us? Can you promise to not attack the fortress again? If you can’t, then we can’t just give our enemy a power-up you know?”

As I said this—

“Hey, don’t come any closer alright? I don’t really hate you, so I came to talk to you, but if you want me to let go of this little guy then you’ll have to listen to what I say. Well, how about this, since you’re a god, why don’t you bet on your name that you won’t ever oppose us again?”

—I began to laugh in a villainous manner that made everyone here uncomfortable.

““““Uwah...””””

Even the hardened adventurers around me released some uneasy murmurs. In a way, it made me I feel like I was doing some unsightly things.

No, this is merely an act to prevent things from taking a turn for worse...!

Anyway, I don't care what these adventurers think about me... As long as my companions take my side...

“Oi, is this guy an evil god as well? I mean, what kind of person can make an evil god cry?”

“Don't say that Aqua. This guy is trying his best to associate with others in his own way. For his sake, you should say those things later.”

“Kazuma-san, that's a bit bad...”

... I want to cry as well.

“...I'll retreat for today, but don't get so full of yourselves! Even if I can't destroy the walls, the situation is merely a stalemate. As long as this fortress exists, my side has no way to advance to the capital. However, as long as we have control of the forest, you won't be able to defeat us either.”

Wolbach continued.

“What's next is a battle of attrition! Until the walls and those murals are thoroughly annihilated, I will continue to attack!”

Just as she was about to teleport away—

“U-, Uhm! Can I ask whether or not you still remember me!? My-, name is...Yunyun...”

Yunyun, who had been silently observing the situation alongside Megumin, suddenly said such odd things.

“...I remember you. That time on the carriage, I invited you to join me on my journey... By the way, your name isn't a nickname either right...?”

As I thought, she didn't just know me, but she knew Yunyun as well.

“It's my real name! Uhm... I remember that incident clearly as well! I even wrote it in my diary, and I would occasionally go back and read it.”

“I-Is that so...? To be honest you don't have to take that incident to heart... but I guess it's fine if you're happy.”

Wolbach seemed to be at a loss for words.

“Uhm—!”

Megumin uttered nervously in quick succession, and tightened her hold on Chomusuke.

“Do you still remember me? My name is Megumin...”

Wolbach showed a wry smile.

“I don't remember.

With a small voice, she activated her teleportation magic and disappeared without a trace.

「私の事は、覚えてますか？
私は、めぐみんと言うのですが……」

「覚えてないわ」

❁ ウォルバク ❁



Part 4

—At the gathering grounds of the fortress.

The knights and adventurers gathered here had a festive mood.

Till now, they had been forced to fight on the defensive, and it had caused a mental and physical strain. However, now that the situation had been somewhat overturned, their mood had become bright, and their gazes were filled with anticipation for the fight to come.

Though the war had merely been pushed to a stalemate—

They were now looking at my each and every move with heavy expectations.

Showers in gazes, I shouted:

“Alright, we’ll now confirm our battle strategy! First, the three of us will use the ‘Hide’ ability to approach the enemy’s camp. Once we get into magic firing range, we’ll fire explosion magic at their camp, and then teleport to retreat! The enemies will probably counterattack afterward, so I would like to ask for everyone’s help when they do!”

Hearing what I had to say, the adventurers released spirited cries.

As Wolbach said—

The battle was currently in a stalemate.

That said, there was no reason for us to not make a move.

The battle strategy this time was extremely simple, but equally effective.

After all, that was the dastardly strategy that the enemy used.

“So it’s another sinister plan... Ah whatever, as long as the counterattack works I won’t hold any complaints...”

Darkness, who was the only one present who could resist explosion magic, and Aqua, who had supreme healing power for both people and the fortress, would stay on standby.

From the looks of it, the people who had been forced to hole up in the fortress had a lot of pent up frustration.

The adventurers and knights gave us – who planned to attack the enemy camp directly – their encouragement, and patted us on the back.

In charge of using teleportation magic, and our backup for special combat situations, Yunyun.

The field commander, and someone with the ‘Hide’ and ‘Enemy Detect’ skills, me.

Finally, the main cannon who used explosion magic, Megumin.

The ones in charge of the counterattack operation were just the three of us.

—As everyone in the fortress saw us off, we began to infiltrate the forest near the fortress.

Monsters liked natural habitats such as forests, so there were a lot of enemy troops stationed in an orderly manner around the area. That way, they wouldn’t have a problem residing here for a long time.

However, the forest was also advantageous for us.

Due to the large amount of fauna obstructing vision, it was the perfect location to display the maximum potential of the ‘Hide’ skill.

Once we get close enough, we’ll be able to detect the enemy movements to some extent.

Perhaps under the superstition that Wolbach’s explosion magic was on the verge of annihilating the fortress, the enemies seemed like they were here for a picnic rather than a war.

I pulled my clothes down, and glanced to the side. Megumin nodded her head in confirmation.

This was the signal that the enemies were in range of explosion magic.

I turned to glance at Yunyun, and she tightened the grip on her wand.

—Alright, let's begin our counterattack!

Part 5

As Wolbach had come day and night to fire explosion magic at the fortress, our enemies felt like victory was already in their grasp. However—

“‘Explosion’—!”

The sure-kill magic was fired at the center of the demon king army encampment.

Since they had been so assured of an easy win, the demon king army that held banquets day in and day out, fell into a state of disarray.

The monsters near the center of the encampment were sent flying, and all that remained was a massive crater.

“W-...What, What is this———!?”

“W-What was that!? Explosion magic—!?”

“It’s the enemy, it’s an enemy ambush—!”

The monster with higher intelligence quickly became cautious of their surroundings.

“Ah! Look over there, those people—! It’s two Crimson Magic clansmen and...”

“‘Teleport’—!”

By the time they discovered us, Yunyun had already activated the teleportation magic.

“—It’s a big success!”

Returning to the fortress with teleportation magic, we reported our great results.

The suppressed anxiety and frustrations of the knights and adventurers were released in the form of cheers.

Shouts of ‘Just like they deserved!’ and ‘I can see it all the way from the watchtower!’ could be heard, and everyone was in an ecstatic mood.

Then—

“The enemy has begun to move—!”

The adventurers in charge of scouting hurriedly returned, and pointed in the direction of the forest.

Everyone assembled in the formation that we had discussed beforehand, and prepared to confront the demon king army.

The demon king army were probably furious after our ambush.

Their gazes were filled with killing intent, and they seemed to have rushed here without even bothering to prepare a formation.

Once we completed our job, the adventurers and knights would take it from there.

It would be troublesome to attack the enemy with our disadvantage in numbers, but it was a different story altogether if we were defending.

In a chaotic battlefield, there was no stage for me to display my abilities.

“My adventurer brethren! We’ll leave the rest in your hands!”

Hearing my shout, the adventurers gave a cry that overcame the intensity of the demon king army’s killing intent.

—After that.

“‘Explosion’—!”

“Ahhhhhhhh!”

“It’s those guys again! Don’t let them get away this time. Get them!!”

“You dare kill my comrades! Don’t think I’ll let you live! Surround them! Surround them!”

A variety of ghouls and demons whom were the elites of the demon king army released angry howls.

“‘Teleport’—!”

—We continued to attack everyday at various times.

“‘Explosion’—!”

“The food! The food storage has been blown apart!”

“Damnit, they’ve come again! Can they at least not come at the break of dawn!?”

“Hurry up and call Wolbach-sama. Tell her to blow those imbeciles away!”

“Wolbach-sama just used explosion magic as well!”

“Just endure it! If we wait a little longer, their fortress walls will fall! When that happens, we can get rid of these pests in one fell swoop!”

“I won’t let them go today! Don’t let them use—“

“‘Teleport’—!”

—Each and every day, we would fire explosion magic as if it was a chore.

“Wahahahahaha! My name is Megumin, the number one magician of Axel! Come, you shall all become my experience points today!”

“They’ve appeared—!”

“Run, hurry up and get outta here—!!”

“Idiot, don’t group up! That Crimson Magic fanatic will fire at places with lots of people! Go over there!”

“No, Not there! We need to split further apart if we don’t want to get hit by—!”

“‘Explosion’—!”

—As her level soared to the skies, her magic power and explosion’s destructive force grew with no end in sight. She was on the verge of being taken by the pleasure and

adrenaline of her explosion magic. Heck, she's even already at the stage where she began to laugh wildly before casting explosion.

“Wahahahahaha! WAHAHAHAHAHA! I have come again today!”

“We understand! We understand! We surrender! We surrender already! Here, do you want some candy!”

“I still have a mother to take care of back at home, so please—!”

“The Crimson Magic clan and demon clans have quite similar names you know? Hey, I think we'll make great friends!”

<TL Note: Magic and Demon share the word: 魔; Crimson Magic can be tl'ed to crimson demon.>

“Let's us discuss together alright!? I'm sure we'll come to a peaceful understanding! War is for idiots after all!”

“Look, we've already dropped our weapons you see!? The great and elegant Crimson Magic clan won't attack defenseless people r—“

“‘Explosion’—!”

—Once the enemy spotted us.

“Megumin, over there! Those people look like they're running in different directions, but they're actually gathering up!”

“I understand! Don't think you guys'll get away!”

“Wahhhhhhahhhhhh. God, please save me!! Wolbach-sama please—!!!”

“If I can choose my life and start over, I don't want to be a demon clansman! I want to be a cat... I want to be fed by a beautiful lady owner everyday... I want to be embraced by her...”

“That's just a dream. That's right, when I wake up, my mother who had gone out for a walk will come back with a wild boar to make steak...””

“I-, I-, I-, I’m someone who is a candidate for a demon king general! If you let me live, I’m sure Demon King-sama will pay a great ransom for me...!”

“‘Explosion’—!”

—They begin to frantically hide and run away.

“I won’t let you get away! Why would I let you escape...Ah! Wait!”

“...Alright that’s enough. Let’s call it a day for now.”

I’ve lost count of how many days it’s been since we started attacking the demon king army.

When we first started, they would diligently counterattack whenever we ambushed with explosion magic. Now, their morale seemed to be utterly crushed. It appeared that they would pack their bags and run back to the demon king territory anytime now...”

“I can’t tell which side is the demon king army anymore...”

Yunyun, who had accompanied us this whole time, uttered fearfully.

Recently, when the enemies saw Megumin, they would kneel on the ground. Others would lie on the ground and pray. Overall, they had given up on trying to run away.

I felt like there wouldn’t be a problem if they deserted the army, but it seems that the demon king army’s hierarchy was rather oppressive, and that there was no way the troops could disobey their superior’s orders.

“Ah this is worrisome. I wouldn’t be able to level efficiently anymore...”

“I’m just gonna remind you, but we didn’t come here to farm experience points alright?”

The spirits in their eyes had completely faded. It was probably time to stop.

Heck, even I started to feel bad about this.

The elites of the demon king army had already lost over half their troops to our daily explosion magic.

Under Aqua's command, the walls of the fortress were repaired to the extent that they were decorated with ornaments. All said and done, the walls were sturdier than when we arrived.

To be honest, I feel like she would be better off being an artisan or a craftsman. At the very least, it was far more beneficial to society than if she were to be an archpriest.

Anyhow, this should be enough.

"Then Yunyun, let's retreat for today. Even though it's a shame I can't fire explosion magic now, we can come again at night when those guys are starting to feel secure. Well then, please prepare the teleportation magic."

Said Megumin, as she rested her staff on her shoulder.

It was then—

"I've been looking for you guys for a long time. It seems we finally meet."

Wolbach, who seemed to have given up on attacking entirely, appeared. Her expression was heavy and pained.

Part 6

We're in trouble.

To think that this kind of situation would occur here...

"It seems that that person isn't here today."

Wolbach looked towards our group and began to chuckle.

She was probably talking about that idling goddess.

It seems that this evil god was still cautious of that person who wasn't useful for normal situations.

Wolbach gazed at Megumin and I.

"You guys went a bit overboard here... To be honest, I don't want to fight anyone I've talked fondly to, so I'm a bit annoyed..."

"W-Wait a second! I don't want to fight you either, after all, we took a bath together before!"

""Ah!?""

Megumin and Yunyun collectively showed their surprise.

"...Please don't mention such things in this kind of situation..."

""Eh!?""

We were talking about important things right now, so I hoped that they won't butt into the conversation.

"U-, Uhm, I feel like they have some sort of misunderstanding..."

"I don't care if they misunderstand. Since we took a bath together twice, and you even said you don't want to treat me as an outsider..."

“I did say that! I know it’s true that I said that! It’s also true that we did take a bath together, but—!”

Wolbach squinted her eyes into a cruel gaze in my direction, and tried her best to change the mood.

“I’ve already investigated you, who have ambushed my subordinates day in and day out. Beldia, Vanir, Hans, Sylvia... Do you still remember these four names?”

Wolbach listened the names of the generals related to me.

“Wolbach onee-san your ears are really red.”

“Shut up!”

After I reminded her of our times together in the bath, Wolbach’s face began to turn red as well.

“I do remember them... but I still don’t want to fight you.”

“Even if you don’t want to, I still can’t let you go. I also need to retrieve my other half. Also, if you’ve managed to defeat four demon king generals... could you be the hero of that fairy tale?”

I am the hero with the weakest job. My special move is peeping.

Wolbach didn’t seem to know what I was thinking.

“Once I learned of your name, I realized I couldn’t let you go. Do you know? The name of the hero in that fairy tale?”

Said Wolbach with confidence. It was like she was saying ‘I already know everything about you!’

“...I don’t know the hero of whatever story you’re talking about. What’s his name?”

“Don’t play dumb. Is it because it happened too long ago, and you’ve already forgotten? The name of the hero in that fairy tale was Satou. Yes, the name is the same as yours, Satou. This name is already rare to begin with, so do you think that this is mere coincidence?”

—But this was a common name in my homeland.

Though, I understand.

Wolbach probably thought of me as some hero's successor or descendant or something.

Even though I felt like I had no relation whatsoever to the Satou she was talking about.

Then—

“Uhm—”

Megumin lowered her staff and said—

“Do you really not remember me?”

Megumin's entire face was dyed a shade of light red. Her eyes glowed bright crimson.

However, Wolbach only so much as glanced at her.

“....Didn't I tell you already? I don't remember you... but don't worry, I'll remember you well from now on—as my sworn enemy who killed many of my subordinates.”

“!?”

Without another word, she quickly began to chant her magic.

“Oi!? Wait a second, I really don't want to fight you...!”

Even though I said that, I could sense that her intent to fight was real.

It was because that chant was—

“Yunyun hurry up and chant your teleportation magic”

“I-, I understand, I-I'll do it as fast as I can!”

As Wolbach began to chant explosion magic, Yunyun hurriedly followed, and began to chant her teleportation magic.

Megumin seemed to be depressed that Wolbach had said ‘I don’t remember’, and showed no signs or intent to cast her magic.

As I was starting to regret leaving the magic tools which I wholeheartedly prepared back at the fortress, I came up with a way—!

After frantically searching my pockets, I pulled something out—

“‘Tinder.’”

I ignited the thing that had been shrunk earlier, and threw it towards Wolbach.

As Wolbach spotted what I had thrown towards her, she hesitated whether or not she should dodge and cancel her magic.

Without waiting for the thing to explode, I grasped the Megumin’s hand, and pulled her towards Yunyun—!

“‘Teleport’—!”

Hearing Yunyun’s shout, I closed my eyes tightly.

Part 7

Having barely escaped with our lives, Yunyun and I fell on our backsides after the teleportation completed.

“Oi, what happened Kazuma!? Isn’t the explosion sound rather small today?”

We teleported to the center of the gathering hall.

Darkness inquired about the situation as we sat on the ground.

Those who noticed that something went wrong with our plan today frantically gathered around.

“Hey Kazuma. What’s up? Why is your face so pale? Did you get beat by that goddess (lol)?”

The goddess (lol) Aqua squatted down beside me.

“We almost got blown away by explosion magic, and all I could do was throw the explosive in my bag and run away. Ah, this is the first time where I felt that my luck is actually good.”

I took a deep breath and shook my head.

“...Hey, what is it? Why are you so excited? Is your other half nearby or something?”

Chomusuke – who I left in the care of Darkness and Aqua – climbed onto my knee.

If what Wolbach said was true, then this little pet of ours was half of an evil god. How should we deal with this...

“Hey Kazuma, by that little explosive you mean the thing you made before? If you threw it and the explosion noise could be heard from all the way over here, that means that the self-proclaimed goddess got blown to pieces right?”

...That’s true, what should we do now...

If the explosion could be heard from all the way over here, that means the dynamite was not a dud.

However, even though I didn't know how much force it had, but it shouldn't be enough to defeat a demon king general.

Then—

“—I'm sorry!”

Megumin, who had approached me while I was distracted in my thought —

“Even though I have been boasting since we left Axel, I wasn't able to use magic at the crucial moment. Please forgive me...!”

Gazed directly into my eyes.

“Did something happen between you and that onee-san in the past?”

I asked out of curiosity.

“...I can't tell you.”

Megumin turned her gaze to the ground. Her expression seemed to be filled with pain, and it looked like she would start crying at any time.

Towards this expression—

I was at a loss of words.

Damn, I did something unnecessary.

No. If Megumin of all people hesitated to attack with explosion, then there has to be some special circumstances right!?

Rather, it was impossible for there not to be. What should I do... She looks like she's about the cry...!

I cast a hopeful glance towards the audience, but not only did the adventurers look away, even Aqua and Darkness actively avoided my gaze.

To think that these guys wouldn't give me a single reprieve...!

—Then.

“Hey, isn't that Wolbach!”

Someone cried out.

Out of curiosity, the adventurers herded around the windows of the gathering hall.

Of course, I did the same, and followed the gazes of the other adventurers—

Wolbach – whose body was dripping in blood – was walking towards the fortress.

“That Wolbach of all people is injured to this extent...!”

“You were called Satou Kazuma right? Not bad at all!”

“I heard from Aqua-sama. Unlike us, you don't have any cheats right?”

The adventurers who saw this began to praise me.

Despite that, I wasn't happy at all.

Even though she was a beautiful lady, but she is our enemy. She was a demon king army general, and an enemy of humanity.

Yeah, there was no need to feel bad about it. That was just self-defense after all...

Just as I was conflicted, someone said.

“Hey, she looks a bit weak right now, if we go now we could probably beat her right?”

The cheaters who heard this gave doubtful glances at one another.

“Alright, then let's go! The demon king army elite have also been decimated!”

“Even though she looks like a beautiful onee-san, this is not the time to be focused on that.”

“If we let our guard down for even a moment we’ll get killed. Oi, anyone who is able to fight, get ready to go! Once we defeat Wolbach we can use the advantage and clean up the rest of em’!”

Hmpf, as the adventurers said. What I did was the natural course of action.

The people quickly trickled out of the gathering hall.

The adventurers and knights were making an uproar that didn’t seem like they were going to war in the slightest. Behind them, was Aqua – who was hurriedly catching up to the group – and Darkness, who showed a stern expression.

...As they were leaving, Darkness turned her head and gave me a sideward glance.

Once we made eye-contact, she nodded her head.

What? What do you mean by that? How do you want me to resolve this!?

You want me to somehow take care of Megumin right now? Is that right!?

Megumin didn’t show any reaction when she heard the news that Wolbach had arrived, and remained standing where she was.

Ah, I was not good at dealing with these heavy atmospheres, after all, I’ve been living life without any worries whatsoever!

As I randomly walked around the room, Yunyun said:

“That person... is a demon king army general, and an evil god.”

Her eyes began to gleam, and she picked up her wand.

“Even though she had invited me to travel with her, even though she made me happy to the point where I have reread that diary entry many times, even though I couldn’t sleep for a couple days after I regret not accepting her invitation—”

Her heavy words brought Megumin and I to a standstill.

“—We are Crimson Magic clansmen. We are members of the strongest magician society that was made to resist the demon king. No matter what happens, no matter

our circumstances, we shouldn't get close with a demon king army general. It is our destiny after all."

Yunyun said with such a serious demeanor, but did she know the real identities of Vanir and Wiz... She would go play around with them once in a while after all...

With wand in hand, she walked towards the entrance of the gathering hall.

"I exchanged a few words with that onee-san before on a carriage. So if she's going to be defeated by the other adventurers who don't know anything about her, I would...I, I...I would rather...!"

Even though she tried her best to stay strong, she could no longer hold it in. She began to tremble, and tears trickled down her face.

Despite Yunyun's words, Megumin, who felt guilty about doing nothing when we encountered Wolbach, remained silent.

She picked up Chomusuke from the ground and hugged it tightly. There was no way I could understand what she was thinking.

However, I understood that something had happened between her and Wolbach.

Furthermore, it was something that made her not want to attack.

I said to Megumin:

"...What do you want to do?"

"...Eh?"

—As if I was asking her where she wanted to go and play around.

"I don't really understand what happened—"

Megumin looked at me perplexedly.

"But something happened between you and that person right? Are you going to willingly watch her get eliminated?"

—As if I was inviting her out for a stroll.

“Our opponent will use her full power if she can, and if she continues to pursue Chomusuke, then our lives will be endangered you know? So I wouldn’t stop the other adventurers from defeating Wolbach.

As I said that, I picked up Chomusuke, who would probably hinder our next battle.

“Isn’t stealing the spotlight the specialty of the Crimson Magic clan?”

Megumin raised her head to face me. Her eyes shone a brilliant crimson. I said to her—

“If you have an opponent you want to defeat personally, I don’t mind helping you.”

Part 8

Under the watchful gazes of the adventurers and knights—

With Chomusuke in my arms, I, together with Megumin, faced Wolbach.

The adventurers that were itching to fight were hard to prevent, so in exchange for letting us have a showdown with Wolbach, I let them in on a little secret. I told them that ‘since you guys have cheats, your adventuring progress has been too quick, so you failed to notice an amazing store in the city of Axel’.

Since their cheats weren’t just for show, they already have the funds comparable to the bounties of demon king army generals.

I can’t help but feel a bit jealous...

I turned my head to glance at Darkness and Aqua, who seemed like they were about to say something. With a small gesture, I told them to stay quiet.

“You, so you really are the hero’s descendant aren’t you? You even used such a fearsome thing...”

Said Wolbach. Her voice was filled with irony, and her cloak was in tatters.

“That was merely a product of civilization. However, I didn’t think that it would have such a strong effect on a demon king army general. Now that I’ve seen its effects, I should consider producing this in mass amounts...”

With Chomusuke in my arms, I taunted Wolbach.

“Hey, why did you come here? The winner of this battle is clear, so isn’t it about time for you to retreat? If you promise to stop pursuing Chomusuke and not make us your enemy, I’ll let you go.”

I knew that she wasn’t going to accept this proposition, but it won’t hurt to try.

“It’s regrettable, but if you are going to mass produce that fearsome thing, there’s no way I can let you live. Also, I cannot let that child go. If I don’t retrieve my power from it, then I will disappear.”

As she said that, she raised her right hand.

If I looked hard enough, I could see through it.

“...So you are something like an undead?”

“My, how disrespectful of you. I am in my current state because I lost a lot of my power. If this continues, my existence will be devoured by my other half.”

Her other half she said, does she mean the little guy I am holding in my arms?

...Eh?

“Um, could I ask something? If I give this guy to you, how would you retrieve your power? Are you two going to morph into one?”

Wolbach replied.

“No, I will need to destroy it with my own hands. If I lower my guard, it will go on a rampage. When we were unsealed, it followed its loose nature and caused a lot of trouble for me, so I sealed away most of its power...”

I didn’t understand the details, but she said she wanted to do some cruel things to Chomusuke.

As a cat-lover, I wouldn’t let that happen.

Then, Megumin, who had remained silent the whole time—

“When you and Chomusuke were unsealed, did you see a little girl? A crimson-eyed girl around 5 to 6 years old...”

She gripped her staff tightly, and asked her question again, this time with resolve.

“I don’t remember.”

Despite being denied in such a ruthless manner, Megumin’s gaze did not avert from Wolbach.

This was a bad turn of events.

I should ask that question again, and change the topic...

“...Hey, if we can talk peacefully like this, why did you join the demon king army?”

With a solemn resolution, Wolbach said:

“If you want to know, then defeat me.”

—With a provoking smile, she repeated her answer from that time.

As I thought, it didn’t work.

It seems like there was no way to avoid fighting her.

“You should know already, but this girl can use explosion magic as well. In other words, by the time the winner is decided, there’ll be no way for us to talk to each other.”

“...I suppose you’re right, then...”

The corners of her lips seemed to pull at her smile.

“Ask the demon king. He will definitely tell you the truth.”

Despite her sorrowful voice, she began to chant her magic.

—Damn! I felt that she was becoming weaker so I tried to buy time, but she was going to strike preemptively!

I knew how fast Megumin could chant her magic.

However, if she started now, there was no guarantee that she would catch up.

I looked at Megumin, who stood beside me—

“...You really remember me, don’t you?”

She gripped her staff with both hands.

Seeing as she hadn't even started, I could feel my skin turning pale. I was about to grab her hand and run away—

“When we talked to each other with Yunyun, you asked about her name like this: ‘...By the way, your name isn't a nickname **either** right?’”

—But she avoided my hand, and without a single motion, she continued to talk to Wolbach. She still hasn't started her chant...

“There's something I wanted to tell you for a long time, there's something I wanted to you to see.”

Towards Wolbach who continued to chant explosion magic—

“The explosion magic that you taught me has already reached the stage where I can control it without chanting. My explosion magic is stronger than anyone else's.”

—she said ‘thanks’.

“‘Explosion’———!!”



Part 9

The demon king army's offensive force was cut in half, and the general that led them was defeated.

This would usually be the time to celebrate, but because of Megumin's circumstances, we decided to call it a day.

We left the fortress the next morning after bidding farewell to the people there in an uncharacteristically proper fashion. Right now, we were at the hot spring inn where I bathed with Wolbach earlier on this journey. Using my arms as pillows, I laid on the bed.

Since a lot of things happened yesterday, it would be best for me to take a bath and quickly go to bed, but the girls were in the bath right now.

There was no problem from a legal perspective, however, when I tried to enter the bath, I noticed the Crimson glow of somebody's eyes, and quickly ran away.

...The dangers of this battle was incomparable to anything I've experienced.

Compared to our opponents from before, she was more...How should I say this? There was always somewhere to run to. This time around, we were on the receiving end of explosion magic. It was a truly terrifying experience.

Well, I'll make sure to not make Megumin angry.

As I reflected on what happened, I put Chomusuke – who had been following me around – on my chest.

...By the way, just what is this little guy?

Wolbach had disappeared without a trace.

Even if was explosion magic, it shouldn't completely annihilate a demon king army general – at least, not to the extent where there were no remains whatsoever.

All that was left behind from the explosion was a beautifully shaped and empty crater. Since I didn't want to see that onee-san's corpse, maybe I should consider myself lucky?

When Megumin had released her explosion magic along with her thanks, I think I saw Wolbach smile...Was it just me?

It would be better if it was just me...

Also, shouldn't this tired furball disappear as well? Its other half was destroyed after all...

I couldn't keep up with the rapid turn of events.

After all, there were just too many things that I didn't understand. My thoughts were just a jumbled mess.

As I was lost in thought, Chomusuke suddenly poked me with its nose.

...I don't care if you are an evil god.

The only one that can cure my heart is you...

As I rubbed Chomusuke, it released a purring noise.

"Kazuma, are you still awake? Everyone is done with their bath."

Someone knocked on my door. It was Megumin.

"Oh alright! I'll go in a bit!"

I didn't want to disturb Chomusuke's peaceful rest, so I had no choice but to lay here.

Then, the door was opened.

"...So Chomusuke was here, I was looking for it you know?"

As she entered the room, she smiled at the sight of Chomusuke resting on my chest.

She then casually closed the door, and sat on my bed.

“This is my healing time alright? So come and fetch this guy later.”

“I didn’t come here to fetch him. I just thought that it might’ve run away from the inn. Seeing Chomusuke with Kazuma is a pleasant feeling.

Despite what she said, Megumin stretched her hand towards Chomusuke, who was resting harmlessly on my chest.

Then—

“...Hey, hey, are you looking for a fight?”

Megumin rubbed Chomusuke, and laid down on the bed beside me.

She slowly began to inch closer.

As if it could read the situation, Chomusuke jumped from my chest, and laid down on the floor.

Megumin ignored my troubled comment, and – as if to hide her expression – she buried herself under the blankets.

“Can I sleep with you tonight?”

Since yesterday’s events, this person had shut herself in her own room... So what did she want from me all of a sudden?

They had known one another, and she had ended her life with explosion magic.

—So it’s not like I didn’t understand her feelings, but...

“...Can you what? What did you say? I don’t know what you’re planning, but I’ll let you know that I’m not the same as I was during my shut-in (hiki)NEET days... Ah I remember now, I promised to myself the first time we stayed here, that if you or Darkness tried to provoke me with underhanded methods, I’ll ‘follow through’ no matter what happens.”

I joked around to lighten the mood.

Megumin’s eyes flared Crimson.

“I can alright? I mean, that’s why I came here tonight.”

She said with a giggle.

...What was she thinking?

The feeling of her breath on my chest was a little hot.

Ah, what is happening all of a sudden? I can’t help but feel a little nervous now...

I’m in big trouble, she’s not just playing around after all...

If this goes on, my lower half will start chanting explosion magic.

“Oi, I’m a healthy young man, so don’t say those kinds of jokes. If you say those kinds of things, men will misunderstand you know? I heard that there are some unpopular men that fall in love with a girl the moment they shake their hand, so be careful alright?”

Doing the best sharp voice impression I could in my nervous state, I lectured Megumin, who laid beside me on the bed.

—But then, she stretched her arms behind my back, and hugged me tightly.

“I told you before didn’t I?”

Even though I couldn’t see her expression, I could hear her soft voice clearly.

“—I love you.”

Part 10

How did it turn out like this?

What's with this sudden development?

No, calm down Kazuma! This is the usual Megumin. She's just a bit strange right now, that's all...

—But I couldn't control my urge to continue on.

Let's start with a self introduction—

I love manga.

I love light novels

I love games, and I love anime even more.

When I was enjoying these wonderful things, I often thought to myself:

—Why isn't he making a move even though this beautiful girl has pushed on so hard!? It's not like you're homo or impotent or something! If it was me, I would've given in a long time ago.

But now, I was the one put into the situation of the male lead of a manga.

It was now, that I finally understood everything.

Please forgive me for saying such things to you guys.

Right now I am being hugged by a young girl in a bed, and she just confessed to me. Please tell me what to do.

Megumin's hug became tighter.

—But it wasn't anything like a painful bear hug.

It was as if she was trying to tell something my heart, and that hugging me tightly was part of the process.

...I'm in trouble aren't I?

In this situation, one small move – one small burst of bravery – is all it would take to cross the line.

No, no, no! I can't cross that! If I'm do then I'm finished!

Calm down and think Satou Kazuma! Think!

This is not to different from that time with Darkness.

Back then, Darkness thought she was going to be married off, so it was a last resort for her.

But this time the person in question had voluntarily come here!

Since our party all lived under the same roof, if Megumin and I did that kind of thing, what would happen in the end...!

This is wrong, this is really wrong!

This girl definitely ate something wrong or hit her head or something—!

Alright, alright, calm down Kazuma. Let's not rush this too hard.

Yea, she's just hugging me right now, and all she ever said was that she liked me.

I could feel my head getting hotter by the moment.

I mustered all my words, and said with a hoarse voice.

"I-, If you keep this up you'll definitely be a bad woman when you grow up. You can't do these things so carelessly alright? Listen closely, if you do something like this to a man, the man's thing will go out of control and they won't be able to resist the urge. In the future, please think a bit before you say such things. Lucky for you, I am a true man with a mind of steel, otherwise you would already be..."

During my speech, Megumin continued to breathe on my chest. I tried to ignore that, and say what I had to with as much modesty as I could.

Megumin began to giggle.

“...When I grow up? What are you talking about?”

Then, she pulled herself closer to me, and said with a light voice:

“I’m almost 15 you know? I’m already an adult.”

I should stop thinking too much.

—I put my right hand on Megumin’s head, and felt her cool hair between my fingers. As if my fingers were a comb, I began to stroke her pretty hair.

Megumin, who continued to lower her head, moved her left hand to my head, and began stroking my hair as well.

I put my arms behind her back and hugged her petite body.

Megumin seemed to relax, and released a deep breath.

...As a virgin, I have tried hard.

So should I do next?

Please, someone teach me what to do.

Am I supposed to go for a kiss?

Damn, think of the simulations I’ve done using the succubus service!

During the silent moment where I was conflicted, Megumin and I continued to hug one another and rub each other’s hair.

Her cool and damp hair was really soothing.

I slid my head under the blanket, and was now face to face with Megumin in the dark.

I can't really see her expression at all.

Using the power of 'Night Vision' and 'Farsight' I could clearly see the outline of her face.

I managed to arrive here by following the flow, but I still didn't understand what was happening all of a sudden.

My nervous mind felt like it was going to break down, but at the same time, my heart was full of expectations.

My chest feels heavy, and my heart is beating nonstop.

Is this 'love'?

Did I begin to like her without noticing?

My heartbeat was not caused by my sexual urges.

I thought and thought on, and finally arrived at a resolution.

—No problem, I have a house, and I have money.

I will definitely be able to live well with Megumin.

Then, Megumin began to pull me in.

Our heads were almost aligned, and her body became closer. Her lips drew close to my chin.

Everytime she breathed, neck would become hot.

Towards her lips, I will...!

"Megumin! Where are you Megumin!? Are you here!?"

Goddamnit! I knew that this would happen!

In response to Aqua's voice in the hallway, I quickly pulled my head out of the sheets.



Outside the door were sounds of frantic running.

I felt nothing but intense anger for the people who couldn't read the atmosphere at all, but I managed to calm down a little. I also felt a little more relaxed.

Mm, I will definitely regret this if I let myself be pressured into it.

After all, today's Megumin was a bit strange.

If I cross the line with her, then our relationship with everyone else will be in jeopardy.

Yea, didn't she say so herself when she was making the charm?

'Of course. These amulets all hold my wish, that everyone will stay together forever... I'm grateful to you too, Aqua. Let's always be together.'

Even if we cross the line, we can still be together with everyone.

But what she wanted was to forever live in harmony with everyone.

Then, this is enough isn't it?

It was too early for me to do this kind of thing with a girl I haven't even dated before.

"Aqua, did you see Megumin on your side?"

Hearing Darkness' voice, I decided to get up from the bed.

However, I was stopped by Megumin who tightly pulled on my hand.

...Eh.

Even though everyone was waiting for her outside, she still wanted to continue?

"M-, Megumin, Aqua and Darkness are...A-Are you alright with this?"

I had my doubts, but I laid back down on the bed.

Even though I had asked her that, she continued to hug me without another word.

“Um, I think Megumin wants to be alone for now. I want to as well... Something happened between her and Wolbach a long time ago after all...”

Yunyun’s voice permeated through the door.

“Is that so...Mm, well there wouldn’t be a problem as long as she doesn’t leave the inn... Then Aqua, let’s go to bed first.”

“Eh~ I wanted the four of us to play poker together...”

Megumin and I were already wrapped in each other’s arms, and I no longer paid attention to the conversation occurring on the other side of the door.

Since neither of us had the courage to make the next move, all we could do was imitate one another.

However, if I’ve already gone this far, then I should see this mistake through to the end.

The relationship between companions?

My relationship with others might be in jeopardy?

Why should I care?

Yea, before I go for a kiss I should say something.

Megumin already said that she likes me, then I should say something back to her.

“M-Megumin. Uhm, you said you love me right? Well...Uhm...I think I also love you too!”

And done!

Now I can just go ahead and do what I want!

Just as I was about to pridefully start this revolution, Megumin—

“...Really? What do you like about me?”

Her head was lowered until now, but now she raised her head and returned my gaze with eyes full of expectation.

Since I wasn't much of a ladies-man, I couldn't really think of anything sweet to say.

"...Um, well, like...explosion magic and such...?"

"If you really have nothing to say, do you think that throwing some explosion magic gibberish would make this better?"

Megumin's gaze went from soft to sharp.

Damn, I shouldn't have done something I'm not used to. Now I've made a huge mess..

Why do I have the ability to crush such sweet atmospheres to smithereens?

Maybe I was cursed with being a virgin for eternity.

But then, Megumin – who I thought didn't want to continue anymore – buried her face in my chest and laughed.

"I love this uncomposed side of you, Kazuma. You have a lot of self-awareness, and when we meet some powerful enemies you won't try to be manly or anything and protect us girls. Instead, you willingly use Darkness as a shield. Also, you don't have the guts to do anything cruel, but you aren't needlessly righteous about what you do either. You'll do bad things when no one is looking, and you'll do good things when you feel like it. You are a paradoxical, uncomposed normal person."

...Eh? Was she complimenting me?

"If you're in debt then you'll work hard, if you're wealthy then you'll stop working. If you're in a good mood you'll be gentle, if you're in a bad mood then you'll be vicious. You seem to think about your companions, but at the same time you won't hesitate to give your party members the short straw. Even though you seem really smart and flexible, sometimes you'll do some unimaginably dumb things..."

Nevermind.


Megumin looked at my troubled expression, and began to laugh.

“Finally, I love you, who always complains about every little thing, but chooses to help everyone in the end. Even though you aren’t straightforward with us, I understand that you are truly kind at heart. When it should be time for you to make a move, you decide not to – just like you are now. You can’t act cool, and you drop the ball at crucial moments, but that is the you that I love.”

She smiled while saying such things, and she brought her hands from my back to my neck.

With the glimmering moonlight behind her, Megumin closed her eyes.

Seeing her like this, I couldn’t help but feel an urge to follow her lead.



「いつも何だかんだ文句を言いながらも
やっぱり皆を助けてくれる、
本当は優しいのに素直じゃない
あなたが好きです」

Was this really alright?

If it kept going like this then this'll work.

Yea, this was another world.

Even though I was still a student back in Japan, in this world where people's life expectancies were short, we were already considered adults.

Megumin was already of marriageable age, so there was no need for me to say any more.

Alright, I'll take this responsibility.

As I slowly drifted my face towards her with resolution—

I saw tears trickle from Megumin's closed eyes...

"...Hey, hey, don't force yourself! Do you really love me? Or is this a bit too early for you? Since I'm a gentleman I have no problem with waiting you know!? I am a man with much to spare, in terms of both money and love experiences—!"

Megumin suddenly began to cry. In response, I began to nervously spout sentences that I couldn't really understand.

"Ah! N-No, this is...!"

Megumin hurriedly recomposed herself, and used her fingers to wipe her tears.

She breathed deep breaths and began to calm down.

"...By the way, why did you come here tonight?"

I asked her such a question on the eleventh-hour.

Part 11

With the pillow in my arms, I stared blankly at the roof.

“That was something that happened when I was about the same age as Komekko.”

Megumin laid beside me, and with her hands on her stomach, she continued her monologue.

“One day, at the village of Crimson Magic, I undid the seal on the evil god. That was when everything started.”

When she was young, Megumin – while playing around – undid the seal of the evil god Wolbach.

At the same time, a giant, black-colored monster suddenly appeared.

Chomusuke – before his power was sealed – tried to attack Megumin.

At that time, Wolbach had used explosion magic to suppress it – and in the process – saved Megumin’s life.

Explosion magic left a large impression on Megumin, and because of that, she had a certain dream.

That onee-san really did some unnecessary things didn’t she?

A long time after that, Megumin learned how to use explosion magic.

After learning magic, Megumin began a full-fledged Crimson Magic clansman, and set off on her journey.

For the sake of repaying the onee-san that had saved her life, she left on a journey.

For the sake of showing the onee-san, she had learned explosion magic.

Her entire journey had been for the sake of searching for her benefactor.

However—

“I didn’t repay her in the end. Instead, I destroyed her by my own hands...”

Megumin continued her monologue, shrouded by the darkness of the room.

She, who was tormented by her own guilt, became uncharacteristically gentle. It seemed like she would disappear at any given moment.

“...Did I tell you before, that back at my homeland I did nothing but sit at home? That I was a NEET that did nothing with my life?”

I suddenly began to talk about my life, and Megumin turned her head to face me.

“Mm, you’ve said that a lot of times already. That...”

I cut her off before she could say any more.

“If you want to talk about being ungrateful, then there is no one who can beat me. My parents spent a fortune to send me to a private high school, but I never went to class, not even once. At first I was just trying to get a bit more free time to do what I wanted. On weekends I would stay up all night to play games, and during the weekdays I would be tired and annoyed. Since both my parents had to go to work, I thought this was a good chance to secretly cut class.”

I began to share my history, which I had kept hidden until now.

“At first I just wanted to be lazy for a day. Then, I would skip class once a month. Then, I would skip class every monday. Before I knew it, I had decided to no longer go to school.”

Now that I think about it, my attitude back then had been a disgrace.

Even though I had decided to not be a NEET once I had graduated from college, that had failed miserably.

In the morning, I would pretend to go to school. Then once my parents left for work, I would sneak back home.

The school called home and asked, but I gave them some random reason to take the day off, and continued playing games.

Finally, the school contacted my parents, and I was forced to go to school, but after a while, I returned to being a NEET.

“You said that you failed to repay her, but weren’t you the one to unseal Wolbach in the first place? Then, Wolbach’s other half came to attack you, and she had saved you and taught you explosion magic. You know, this is what they call a ‘match-pump’. I know an delinquent adventurer that does that kind of thing.”

Megumin looked at me with a puzzled expression.

“In order to save the benefactor that unsealed her, she stopped the rampage of her other half. That’s what anyone would’ve done, so there’s no need to treat her as your benefactor... If you’re troubled by such a little thing, how would I ever be able to face my parents?”

However, even if I wanted to see them, there was no way I could.

“So what I mean is...How should I say this. In terms of the extent of ingratitude, no one can match up to me. In the time that you spent troubled by this, I had already become a piece of living trash. So, uhm...”

I didn’t really know what I wanted to say.

As I was at a loss for words, Megumin began to laugh.

She buried her face in my chest, and pressed on my shoulders to resist the urge to laugh.

“...What is that supposed to mean!? I just tried to comfort you in my own way, and you repay me with this clown act? I even dug up my embarrassing history in order to do it! Now this is really what I would call ingratitude!”

“I’m sorry. It not that I’m looking down on you, I just thought it was sad that those parents had such a child. I also thought that using such a weird way to comfort me was pretty funny.”

This damn kid!

“Well I’m sorry I did something I’m not good at! Listen up! You might think that you are the female lead of some tragedy, but the one who is suffering the most is actually

me! You came to my room so that I could comfort you over some insignificant problem that didn't even exist in the first place! Have you ever thought about my feelings!?"

As I continued to complain, Megumin continued to grab my shoulders and wipe her tears of laughter.

"Then do you want to continue?"

"N-N-N-No way! Even though I would hurt myself to solve some insignificant problem, I won't allow someone to lay a hand on me by taking advantage of my wounds!"

I adamantly replied, and Megumin began to laugh as she usually would.

"Well then, that's a shame isn't it?"

Her eyes shined Crimson in the darkness, and no matter how I looked at it, I couldn't feel a hint of regret.

"...Well then, if you can finally let go of your guilt towards that onee-san, and if you wanted to do that kind of thing again, I have no reason to refuse—!"

Feeling like I had done something I would regret, I tried to save what was left.

Megumin shook my shoulders and said—

"Is that so? If that day really comes, then I'll come to your room to play again."

She showed a brilliant smile.

'Thank you very much, I feel a lot less burdened now' — Leaving such standard lines, she left the room.

Opposite to her lightheartedness, I was turning restlessly in my bed.

"Ahhhhhhh! I wasted such a good chance, and I even said such disgusting things! Agghhhh!!"

Part 12

Since her troubles were now transferred to me, I decided to cool my head somewhere.

Unlike before, I decided to take a cold shower.

I regretted what I did, but to be honest, I felt that doing such a rookie mistake wasn't bad either.

Anyway, based on what happened, Megumin and I are now in a relationship.

After all, I told her things like 'I love you' and stuff.

Since I thought 'this relationship isn't bad either', that means my feelings for her were deeper than I thought...

...Eh, does that mean she'll be my girlfriend starting tomorrow?

Oi oi oi, am I finally going to experience real life!?

"No no no, calm down for a moment. Megumin has been a bit strange since yesterday. I'll just observe her situation before I decide."

I muttered such things to myself while in the changing room.

Then...

"...What are you doing?"

"Meow~"

Chomusuke had suddenly appeared at my feet, and I involuntarily asked such a question.

This little fellow had been staying out of our way for a while, but I suppose it was about time it returned to normal.

Since it didn't like baths, I shouldn't let it go...

“...This is the bath that you hate very much you know? Are you sure you want to go in?”

Keeping an eye on Chomusuke who had adamantly followed me all the way here, I sat down beside the shower and turned the valve.

As I showered, I thought of what would happen from now on.

All in all, I should just pretend that nothing happened yesterday.

I should wait for the person in question to decide to approach me on her own accord, only then will I count that incident.

Even though I was slightly annoyed at my resolution, I decided to stick with it.

After showering, I could feel my head and body becoming cooler, and quickly moved to enter the bath.

As I was about to enter the bath...

“...Y-, You want to come in?”

“Meow~”

Chomusuke leaned its legs towards the pool, and looked like it was eager to go in. Even though I was a bit suspicious of its sudden change in behavior, but I decided to ignore that for now, and carried it into the water.

“You’ll drown if you enter the bath, so just use this for now.”

As I said that, I filled the shower bucket with spring water, and put it off to the side. Chomusuke, as if testing the water temperature, dipped its paws into the water. Finally it rolled itself into a ball and laid down in the bath.

...What was up with this cat...

Well, it wasn’t really a cat.

I didn’t really know why it suddenly liked baths, but it was a good thing if it liked to be clean.

I can't help but feel like it was a lot like that onee-san.

I absentmindedly asked:

"Wolbach-san, how is the water temperature?"

The moment I called it Wolbach, one of its ears moved a tiny bit.

.....

Just a coincidence?

Or did that mean that Chomusuke was going to transform into a human shape?

If we raise this cat, will it eventually become that onee-san?

"...Naw, it couldn't be."

I submerged my shoulders into the water, and gazed at Chomusuke who comfortably lay in the bath.

"...Hm? By the way, you haven't grown at all in the last couple months, but I can't help but feel that you look a little bigger now..."

EPILOGUE 1

FOR THE SAKE OF THIS PERSON

I messed up.

I parted in such a way with the person I had been looking for all my life, and in an emotional moment, I did something I shouldn't have done.

How should I face him starting tomorrow?

He said that he loves me as well, so does that make us lovers?

Should I change the way in which I treat him?

“*Fuhaah~~*- Good morning!”

The culprit of my troubles appeared with a yawn. With a sleepy expression, he lazily walked to where we were.

Kazuma, who had begun packing his luggage before fixing his bedhead, said:

“Yunyun, let's go back with ‘Teleport’.”

...Going to back to Axel from the fortress would have only taken a fleeting moment, but since we had come all the way here during our journey, we decided to go to a hot spring on our way back to relax.

“I don't really mind doing that, but why did you suddenly bring that up?”

When Yunyun asked, he showed some suspicious behavior.

“T-There's nothing really, I just really miss Axel you know~~”

Immediately after Kazuma, who said such insincere things–

“Yeah, I want to hurry up and get back to Axel for my heartfelt reunion with Emperor Zell! Let's go home quickly and have a celebration party! We beat that evil-god after all!”

Aqua announced her plans without a hint of any ulterior motive. All she wanted to do was to celebrate with everyone.

“You’re right, we should be proud of our efforts this time. Until now, we fought against the demon king army generals because we were forced to, but this time around we had fought them on our own accord, and managed to defeat them as well.”

Said Darkness, as she stuck out her chest in a prideful fashion.

But–

“To be honest though, you didn’t really do anything.”

“Eh?”

Darkness – who had her moment of pride stolen by Kazuma – became a bit teary eyed.

“Hey, Yunyun, do you want to stay with us? There’s no need to force yourself to stay with us...”

“Eh!? Ah, y-, you mean me? Uhm, erm... if you would let me join you, I would happily...!”

Just as everyone seemed to have agreed to celebrate tonight, and were happily discussing their plans, Kazuma said:

“Ah, by the way, I’m not coming back tonight.”

It’s not like he was Aqua, so why did he say such ignorant things?

“You’re not coming back? Then where are you planning to go!? I mean, when you go out with your friends, what exactly are you guys doing?”

“Hm!? T-T-T-T-That’s is well, shouldn’t you understand? It’s just things that friends do together, you know...”

The sharp intuition of the Crimson Magic clan is telling he was going out on some funny business.

“So you’re just doing things with friends? Then tell them to come celebrate with us. It’s a rare occasion for us to gather, so the more the merrier right?”

“Eh-!?”

Kazuma’s expression looked as if he was witnessing the end of the world. Once again, I reaffirmed the greatness of my intuition.

Even though I didn’t know what he planned to do, he obviously wasn’t up to anything good.

I walked up next to Kazuma, whose shoulders were drooped, and patted him on the back.

“Well well, why don’t we have a drink with Kazuma tonight to celebrate his achievements?”

“Hey you, do you even know why I’m staying out tonight?”

Said Kazuma begrudgingly. Even so, I didn’t know what he meant.

“How would I know? By the way, where are you going?”

“The café, you know, that ‘café’? The one that operates 24/7?”

A café that operates 24/7?

There was only one café in the town of Axel that matched that description.

“...You, after what happened last night, you decided to do this kind of dirty business?”

“Hmm? What wrong Megumin? Your eyes are really red... What are you so excited about? Was it something that happened last night?”

This guy–!

...No, calm down for a bit, even though we said that we love each other, we never said that we were a couple.

Which means I had no reason to be angry.

“...That store has a lot of sexily dressed onee-sans. Hmm? Are they Kazuma’s type?”

“Huh, so you know about that store? And the type I like huh... I wonder what it is...?”

His reply was full of indecision.

“...While we’re talking about this, could I ask what type of girl Kazuma likes?”

“My type? Hm, I haven’t really considered that before... If I really have to say it though, it would be a ‘long haired, big boob’ed girl that would dote on me a lot’?”

Hearing him reply with such ease, I felt the need to reconsider my love for this man.

After what happened yesterday, shouldn’t his preference be a lot closer to me?

“Hey, what is it? I heard that if you sigh so much your luck stat would decrease you know?”

He wasn’t popular because he was always like this. Oh well—

It would be fine if I was the only person to love this strange person.

“Everyone, the preparations for ‘Teleport’ are done.”

Everyone gathered their belongings together—

“Alright, I’ll use the bounty reward to live outside for a week! Though I don’t really know how large the reward is.”

I had no idea why he wanted to stay outside for a week, but as usual, he was probably up to no good.

As I pondered about this—

“‘Teleport’—!”

—I decided that I would grow my hair longer.

EPILOGUE 2

DEAR, ONII-SAMA

–About one week after we returned to Axel

I was about put the plate down to feed Chomusuke, but I was interrupted by Megumin as she entered the room.

“...Kazuma, are you feeding it a bit too much? You shouldn’t dote on it so much you know?”

“But this guy hasn’t stopped eating—Here here, eat more and grow up quickly~”

Before you become that onee-san, I hope we can get along well.

Also, please forgive Megumin for using explosion magic on you.

“...There’s a letter for Kazuma. I don’t really know what’s it about though.”

A letter for me?

“Is it that dragon egg salesman again? Ever since I bought Emperor Zell, he’s been sending these mails every day.”

The idiot who got tricked lured a lot of scammers to this house.

“If it was sent to Kazuma then it probably isn’t anything good. Let me take a look.”

“Here it is... I can’t help but feel like I’ve seen this envelope somewhere...”

Megumin passed the envelope to Darkness...

Darkness opened the envelope and peeked inside. Without a moment’s delay, she shoved it in her chest pocket.

“...Oi, what are you trying to do with a letter addressed to me?”

“...It is as Aqua said, it’s just a letter from the dragon salesman.”

“It’s just as I divined! Isn’t this great Kazuma? The mails sent to me all address me as ‘This letter is addressed to the one destined to a dragon, an adventurer of great fame and might.’”

Ignoring Aqua who was saying stupid things again, I said to Darkness, who tried to avoid my gaze:

“Oi, give me the let—.”

“I refuse.”

Darkness replied in an instant, and proceeded to roll herself into a ball, as if she was pregnant woman protecting her child.

Seeing her action, I could tell who the sender of the letter was.

Because I’ve seen Darkness do this before.

“It’s Iris right!? Iris sent me that letter right!?”

“How did you guess!? No, I mean, this is just a—!”

I mercilessly stretched my hand towards Darkness’ chest as she desperately tried to refute my claims.

“AAhhhhhhhh!?”

“Look! As I thought, this is a letter sent to me by Iris!”

Darkness put her hands by her chest and bent down.

Hmpf, don’t think that I wouldn’t lay a hand on the letter if you put it by your chest.

After all, I am no longer the wuss that I was. I have been reincarnated as a ruthless man.

As I was thoroughly experiencing the thrill of my victory, I opened the letter.

Undoing the royal seal, I unfolded the letter—

‘Dear Onii-sama,

I have heard of your great achievements at the fortress nearby. You always seem to have dive headfirst into danger, so I have been a bit worried of your wellbeing...’

Just reading the header of the letter has warmed my heart.

‘This time, I have a request for Onii-sama, who has become one of the nation’s greatest adventurers.’

Then I read the last sentence.

“Actually, I am going to meet with the prince of a neighboring country with whom I have an arranged marriage with, so I would like to hire onii-sama as my bodyguard–”

And viciously ripped the letter.



AUTHOR'S AFTERWORD

Megumin has been very Megumin in this volume, but I've decided that she should feel the stench of this love quite soon.

I didn't really intend to do so forcefully, but there is a limit to my skills as an innocent and inexperienced writer.

I will continue to try out new writing elements, and try to improve every day. One day, I will write something that will make everyone laugh out loud.

In the volume, I have been helped by Mishima Kurone-sensei, S-san, and all the people related to the publishing process. Everyone has helped the book see a peaceful and successful release.

Finally, I would sincerely thank you for buying this book! (TL Note: Heh, you guys better go buy it!)

ARTIST'S AFTERWORD

Thank you everyone for purchasing the ninth volume! (TL Note: Heh...again)

This volume has been Megumin's turn to shine on the grand stage...! I'm actually really jealous of Kazuma!

Thanks to everyone's support, a second season of the anime has been green-lit, and Megumin's Bakuen (explosion) spin-off is getting manga!

When I think that the Konosuba series will continue on like this, my heart aches a little!

–Mishima Kurone



-Atogaki-

9巻お買い上げ頂きありがとうございます！
今回は本当、めぐみにきゅんきゅん
しつぱなしの巻でしたね…！
カズマさん羨ましいんですけど…！？
応援して下さる方々のおかげで
アニメの第2期も決まって、更にはめぐみの
スピンオフコミカライズも始まって！
まだまだこのすば！の世界が続いていくと思うと
わくわくしますー！

三嶋くろね



きゃあああああああああああああ!

な、なんだなんだ!?
カズマ、一体どうしたんだ!
アクセルに帰ってからというもの
なんだか様子がおかしいぞ!?



カズマがおかしいのはいつもの事
だけど、今回は特におかしいわね。
頭にヒールはいるかしら?

.....



ああああああああ! ふああああああああ!
うひゃあああああああああああ!

.....なあアクア、カズマをちょっと休ませてやろう。
なんせまた魔王の幹部を倒したのだ。
そろそろ勇者と言われてもいいくらいの活躍ぶりだからな!



これ、相当の重症だと思うんですけど。
ちよつと休ませたぐらいで治るのかしら

.....力、カズマ。その、あの夜の事は気にする必要はないですよ?
まあ色々ありましたが、いきなりそこまでの反応をされますと、
私も気恥ずかしいと言いますか.....



そんな小さな事は最初から気にしてないよ! この手紙によるならば!
俺の大事な妹が、どっかの国の馬の骨に盗られるんだぞ!
これが黙っていられるかよおおお!!

この男!!!!

っの
素晴らしい
世界に祝福を! 10



COMING
SOON!!

SHORT STORY

AN OCCASIONAL CLICHE STORY

That day.

After coming to this world, I finally encountered an anime like event.

“Hyaaa!?”

Darkness’ naked body was before me.

Yes, this is the so called ‘lucky pervert incident’.

“Hey, why didn’t you lock the door. Let me be clear first, I am not in the wrong at all. After all, there is no need to knock before entering the bathroom in the day.”

After waking up early in the morning, I headed to the bathroom to wash off the sweat, and ran into Darkness who was taking her clothes off.

Well, we lived in this house for more than a year, so such things do happen.

Seeing how calm I was, Darkness was dumbfounded momentarily.

“Y-Y-You turn your head away! And don’t try to play it off so easily, I already told everyone that the lock to the bathroom is broken! And even if this is an accident, men have to apologize for seeing the skin of a maiden!”

“Don’t think your warped logic will work on me! All you feminist are the same, always pushing for gender equality, but will ask the men to give way when things don’t go your way! If I accomplish enough merits to earn a peerage, I will abolish this trash system. Starting from this house.”

“I get it, I really do! There’s too many things to retort, so turn your head back first!”

Darkness finally give in to my flawless argument, and answered with a crying face.

After being judged to be innocent, I averted my face in relief.

“We already bathed together once, why are you still so shy? And you have already taken care of me a lot in that certain shop.”

“You are still going on about that!... And what is that shop?”

“That shop is just that shop. A shop that will be fine even if the young lady doesn’t know about it. By the way, are you done? I just woke up with a body of sweat, so I want to have a quick bath.”

Darkness was hit badly by these words.

“Y-You really have no reaction after seeing me naked. To think that you are still concerned with your sweat at a time like this.”

“I won’t be shaken by your naked body anymore. If you understand, then get dressed and leave.”

Darkness complained about my answer as she dressed.

—— After washing myself in the bathroom, I cast freeze onto my warm body in the living room. Darkness glared at me with slanted eyes.

“... What, you want freeze magic too?”

“No! I am just mad that you don’t even care after seeing me in the nude! You saw the bare body of a woman, don’t you find your attitude right now terrible?”

“You are really troublesome... It’s partly my fault for not remembering about the lock being broken yesterday or the day before. But I really hope you can tell me if you want me to be interested or not interested in your naked body.”

“... Well, the ideal situation would be for you to be very interested, but I don’t want you to see.”

What a troublesome woman.

“If it was Aqua, she will forget after I buy a bottle of expensive wine for her. Megumin would probably not mind at all.”

“That’s because they are abnormal! If you feel any guilt at all, I don’t mind forgiving you if you apologize. I don’t need you to buy wine for me like Aqua, just do something to appease me.”

Darkness made a roundabout speech just like a noble.

“Do something to appease you. Abuse you verbally or kick you in public? I am a normal guy without such fetishes and can’t do such Play with you...”

“Idiot, I don’t need such nonsensical things at a time like this! There are many things you can do. Like giving me something I like, or accompany me to a restaurant with great atmosphere.”

Gifts and to accompany her...

“If it is something you like, there isn’t any pet shop so no collars. As for restaurants... I only frequent the barbecue shop though.”

“... At a time like this, I hope you can put my fetish aside and give me something normal. As for restaurants, those frequented by commoners feel rather fresh, but it would be better if it caters for advanced booking or memberships.”

This girl was troublesome in many ways.

Her fetish and her personality were both troublesome.

“Go and prepare gifts for me as apology! If you see the skin of a maiden, you will have to pay the appropriate price...!”

Darkness was all smiles and was probably getting cocky as I appeared to be deep in thought.

Her smug face when she held the advantage was annoying too.

... I couldn’t be bothered to think anymore.

“I get it, I will let you see my naked body and call it a draw. Then it’s all good.”

“How is that good!? Who want to see that... Hey, don’t take your pants off, stop! I-I get it, forget about this! S-Stop... Hyaaahh!”

It had been a while since I heard Darkness squealed like a girl.

—Short story published in GAMERS

SPECIAL STORY

A CERTAIN CHICK'S SPECIAL MOVE

“Hey Kazuma, listen to this, Emperor Zell finally learned a trick.”

Aqua said as she held Emperor inside her palms.

After having a slightly late lunch, everyone entered idle mode.

Sitting across from Darkness, I stared at the chessboard on the table——

“I admit that you are a first rate performer, but it’s impossible for a chick to learn a trick. We are betting the dishwashing chore for next week, don’t disturb us.”

“Heehee, I have always been losing but I have a big advantage today! And you have already used the once a day explosion rule in your match against Megumin! I will win, there’s no way I can lose!”

I ignored Darkness whose eyes were sparkling with excitement and focused back on the board.

A short distance away, Megumin – who had needlessly exhausted her mana today, and had also spent all her brain power in her match with me – laid weakly on the couch.

Damn it, if I knew, I wouldn’t have used my full power against Megumin.

“Aqua, Kazuma and Darkness seemed busy, how about letting me be your audience.”

“Is he really? Well then Megumin, I’ll allow you to be the one to witness Emperor Zell’s magnificent performance.”

I felt relieved that the annoying girl is gone, and concentrated on the board once again, thinking about how to turn around my losing game.

“How about it Kazuma, it’s about time you surrender right? After I told my father about my consecutive losses, my father, who is known as the treasured sword of the Kingdom, taught me this sure win tactic.”

“For a grand noble, your dad is too childish. He dotes on his daughter too much.”

Ughh, what to do. Should I hide the thief over here...

“W-What is this!? I was thinking that a mere chick won’t be able to do much...!”

“Hmmp, you get it right? After all, it is not a chick, but a dragon. This is just a simple matter.”

.....

“Hey Aqua, what did that thing do? Show me.”

Although this was a crucial moment in the contest, Megumin’s exclamation intrigued me.

“You just said you don’t want to see, so why are asking again? Emperor Zell’s performance had ended for the day. The next show would be next month.”

“Ah, hey that’s too much, just show it to me for a while, I am very bothered.”

Or rather, I wouldn’t be able to concentrate if I don’t take a look.

“Hey Kazuma, just concede if you want to see Emperor Zell’s performance. I saw it too, it was amazing. It probably surpasses Aqua’s usual performance.”

“... That amazing?”

What should I do? Solely in terms of party tricks, I had to admit that Aqua was good.

No, or rather, she had no other good points except for her healing spells and party tricks.

“Aqua, please do it again! I have never seen something so amazing.”

“No Megumin, that’s a performance from Emperor Zell’s soul it did in order to repay my careful daily tutelage. It’s not something that could be performed so simply.”

Aqua and Megumin ignored me who didn’t see it at all and got all excited.

“I couldn’t help being impressed after seeing that performance. Kazuma, are you willing to be the only one not to have seen it?”

Darkness taunted me as I was caught in a dilemma.

“You’ll regret it if you don’t see it. Emperor Zell’s lifespan might shorten if it performs that too many times. It is sleeping now because it exhausted all of its energy from doing that right?”

“Right? If Emperor Zell doesn’t want to, then I can’t do anything about it... Ahh!? Emperor Zell woke up! Are you fine!? You are doing it!? You want to perform again!?”

“Ah! Emperor Zell just...! Kazuma, Darkness! Emperor Zell is all prepared!”

What does ‘prepared’ mean, I was very bothered.

And Aqua said if I miss this chance, the next one would be next month.

“Hey, hey Aqua! Don’t mess around and come here, I want to see. Darkness, let’s take a time out.”

“No. It’s your loss if you leave the seat. How can you leave before the match is decided? Come, choose! You want the party trick or to battle!”

Uwaahhhh.

“Alright, get ready Megumin! Watch carefully and witness Emperor Zell’s special performance!”

“If I can see it again, the lofty me might fall for Emperor Zell!”

Ahh, damn it!

“I get it, I concede! Hey Aqua, wait, I want to see too!”

The moment I concede to Darkness, Aqua and Megumin high fived.

.....?

“Then watch Emperor Zell’s special performance carefully.”

Darkness who was wearing a proud face started putting away the chess pieces. This gave me an ominous feeling.

“Look closely at Emperor Zell’s special trick!”

Aqua held Emperor Zell gently in her hands with a dumb smile, then cupped her hands together...

After a while, Emperor Zell snuggled into a ball, closed it’s eyes and slept.

“This child will sleep when I do this. Early to bed and early to rise makes a chick healthy wealthy and wise, right?”

Early to eat and early to shit makes it wealthy?

Or rather, covering a chick with your hands to make it sleep is not a performance, but the nature of chicks.

... Hey, hold it.

Megumin had suddenly challenged me earlier today, and Aqua had enticed me to look at Emperor Zell’s mediocre performance. Was it all Darkness’...

“Here, Aqua, Megumin. This is the agreed payment. But father is really despicable... To use circumstances outside the chess board to force the opponent to concede...”

“Hey, wait a minute ahhhhhh!”

—Digital Edition Special Story

